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Frontispiece.

WELLINGTON

LIFE

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WITH AN ADDITION

Illustrated.

EDINBURGH:
P. NIMMO, HAY, & MITCHELL.
1885.

LIFE

OF THE

DUKE OF WELLINGTON.

BY

W. H. MAXWELL,

AUTHOR OF

"STORIES OF WATERLOO," "THE BIVOUAC," ETC. ETC.

REVISED AND ABRIDGED FROM THE LARGER WORK,
WITH AN ADDITIONAL CHAPTER.

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PREFACE.

MAXWELL'S *Life of Wellington* may be considered, both in regard to style and matter, far superior to any other that has yet been produced. It deals almost exclusively with the military career of the hero, and affords most graphic and faithful pictures of his many great battles and campaigns. The present abridged edition is issued uniform with the other biographies in this series.

The original work, consisting of three volumes, is too large for the purposes of the general reader. Much of its bulk is occupied with military and official despatches, while the circumstances to which these refer are at the same time fully described and discussed in the author's own words. There are whole chapters descriptive of events in which Wellington had no share whatever, or which had little or no bearing on his career. The work also contains a considerable amount of political and controversial matter.

It is hoped, therefore, that this abridgment from which nearly all matter of this kind has been left out, will afford to the public a more readable and succinct narrative than that given in the original volumes. In the concluding chapter—which embodies the author's own sketch of the character of Wellington—the editor has amplified a little, and touched upon the political history and some of the more interesting occurrences in the life of the great Duke from the year 1815 till his death.

CONTENTS.

LIFE OF WELLINGTON.

CHAPTER I.

ARTHUR WELLESLEY, Duke of Wellington, was born at Dangan Castle (some say at Dublin), near Trim, 1st May 1769. The name Wellesley had been assumed by his grandfather, Richard Colley, on succeeding to the estates of his kinsman, Garret Wellesley of Dangan. Both families, Colley or Cowley and Wellesley or Wesley, were English by descent. After representing the family borough of Trim for many years in Parliament, Richard Colley was raised to the peerage of Ireland by George II. under the title of Baron of Mornington. He was succeeded in the title and estates by his son Garret, who was created Viscount Wellesley and Earl of Mornington in 1760. Lord Mornington died in 1781, leaving a large family, and a property considerably encumbered. He was succeeded by his eldest son, Richard, afterwards Marquis Wellesley.

The earlier education of the distinguished brothers, the Earl of Mornington and the Hon. Arthur Wellesley, commenced at Eton. In due time Lord Mornington removed to Oxford, and there completed his studies; while, with

excellent judgment, his younger brother Arthur was removed to the Military College of Angers, in France, as a fitter school for one already destined to the profession of arms.

That Wellington, beyond a fair and creditable proficiency, exhibited no marked superiority at Angers, is acknowledged; while Napoleon, his contemporary at Brienne, if assertion be true, displayed martial propensities in everything connected with his studies or his sports. Had the latter fallen at Toulon, would his snowballings have been remembered and recorded? All boys of strong nerve and lively disposition are essentially martial in their amusements; for every field game is but the similitude of a battle. Here, however, strength rather than science obtains the mastery. A year or two confers a temporary superiority on the boy; for a time he maintains a leadership; this advantage is lost as he approximates to manhood; and the bully of the school is rarely found in after-life among the bravest and most fortunate.

Lord Mornington, having attained his majority, had offered himself and been returned for the borough of Beeralston, and obtained place under Mr. Pitt. He was subsequently elected a representative of the royal borough of New Windsor, and named one of the Commissioners for Indian Affairs. This appointment, in some degree, led the way to his future promotion; and an event, at the time occasioning but trifling notice, influenced, no doubt, his own subsequent success, and still more decidedly directed the fortunes of his distinguished brother.

On the 7th of March 1787 Arthur Wellesley obtained his first commission, being gazetted to an ensigncy in the 73d regiment, and on the 25th of the following December he was promoted to a lieutenancy in the 76th. In the succeeding month he exchanged into the 41st, and on the 25th of June was appointed to the 12th Light Dragoons. On the 30th of June 1791 he was promoted to a company in the

58th foot, and on the 31st of October 1792 obtained a troop in the 18th Light Dragoons.

At the general election, which occurred during the summer of 1790, he was returned to the Irish Parliament for Trim, a borough whose patronage belonged to the house of Mornington. His personal exterior must have been very different from what those who have only seen him in after-life would imagine. Sir Jonah Barrington describes him as "ruddy faced and juvenile in appearance;" and adds "that he was popular among the young men of his age and station." Alluding to his parliamentary *début*, he observes, "his address was unpolished; he spoke occasionally, and never with success; and evinced no promise of that unparalleled celebrity which he reached afterwards."

That Barrington was a very superficial observer the following anecdotes will prove:—

"The first time I ever visited the gallery of the House was on the opening of the session of 1793, and I was accompanied by a friend, a barrister of high standing and a person of acknowledged judgment. He was one of a celebrated society termed 'The Monks of the Screw,' and consequently was on intimate terms with all the leading men of the day, including Grattan, Cuff (afterwards Lord Tyrawly), Langrish, Parnell, Wolf, &c. &c. As each member entered the House my friend named them in succession, and generally at the same time rapidly sketched their characters. A young man, dressed in a scarlet uniform with very large epaulettes, caught my eye, and I inquired who he was. 'That,' replied my friend, 'is Captain Wellesley, a brother of Lord Mornington's, and one of the aides-de-camp of the Lord-Lieutenant.' 'I suppose he never speaks,' I added. 'You are wrong; he does speak sometimes, and when he does, believe me, it is always to the purpose.' The subject which occupied the attention of the House that night was one of deep importance in Irish politics. A farther concession to the claims of the

Roman Catholics had been recommended in a speech from the throne, and an animated debate resulted. Captain Wellesley spoke on the occasion, and his remarks were terse and pertinent, his delivery fluent, and his manner unembarrassed. I particularly recollect casual allusion to parliamentary reform produced from him the parenthetic observation, 'By the by, were such a measure introduced, I should most strenuously oppose it.'

"On another occasion I was present when a property qualification for members of Parliament was first brought under the consideration of the House. The Hon. John Monk Mason opposed it. He held a large roll of papers in his hand, which he flourished vehemently, to the manifest alarm of the members immediately beside him. In winding up his speech he emphatically concluded by saying, 'I give my determined opposition to this invidious measure, in the name of all the younger brothers in the House,' striking Captain Wellesley, who sat beside him, so sound a whack between the shoulders with his parchment baton, as to be heard distinctly in the gallery. The occurrence produced an instant and uproarious burst of laughter through the House."

The appointment of Captain Wellesley to the staff of the Earl of Westmoreland had placed him in the household of the Viceroy, and as aide-de-camp required his constant attendance at the castle. The Irish court at that period was celebrated alike for its hospitality, its magnificence, and its dissipation. The princely display of the Lords-Lieutenant of those days entailed a heavy expenditure upon the numerous *attachés* of the court, and too frequently plunged young men of high family and limited fortunes in very distressing embarrassments. Captain Wellesley's patrimony was small, his staff appointment more fashionable than lucrative; and it is not surprising that soon after he had come of age he found himself involved in pecuniary

difficulties. At the time, he lodged in the house of an opulent bootmaker who resided on Lower Ormond Quay. The worthy tradesman discovered accidentally that his young inmate was suffering annoyance from his inability to discharge a pressing demand. He waited on Lieutenant Wellesley, told him that he was apprised of his embarrassments, mentioned that he had money unemployed, and offered a loan, which was accepted. The obligation was soon afterwards duly repaid; and the young aide-de-camp was enabled, in a few years, to present his humble friend to an honourable and lucrative situation. Nor did death cancel the obligation; the Duke's patronage, after his parent's death, was extended to the son of his early friend, for whom he obtained a valuable appointment.

The professional advancement of Captain Wellesley was steadily progressive. On the 30th of April 1793 he was gazetted Major of the 33d foot, on the resignation of Major Gore; and on the 30th of the following September he succeeded to the lieutenant-colonelcy of the regiment, *vice* Lieut.-Colonel Yorke, who retired from the service.

For the last three years the political horizon of Europe had been seriously overcast, and affairs daily became more gloomy. The alarming spread of democratic principles, the murder of the French monarch, the increase of the Republican army to 450,000 men, and the extraordinary success that attended these raw and undisciplined levies, roused Britain into energy, and compelled her to prepare herself for a contest on which not only her liberties but her existence as an empire were dependent.

France was fearfully convulsed; the Reign of Terror was at its height; and though persecuted to the death, the Royalist party—from their limited means unequal to make head against the Democrats—still maintained a courage and displayed an attitude of resistance worthy of a better fortune. Hence there was a hope that if the Bourbon

party were supported from abroad, a reaction might be produced in France, and the alarming spread of republicanism be yet arrested. To effect this object a landing on the coast of Brittany was proposed, an expedition prepared with all possible despatch, and the command entrusted to the Earl of Moira. Among other regiments that received orders of readiness for the coast of France the 33d was included.

But the failure of the Duke of York in the Netherlands caused the attempt on Brittany to be abandoned. The destination of the troops, now on board transports, was consequently changed; and instead of proceeding to the coast of France, the troops were ordered to sail directly for Ostend.

A gloomier prospect never opened on an army about to take the field. Tournay had already surrendered; the Duke, forced from his position before Oudenarde, was falling back on Antwerp; and Lord Moira prudently determined to withdraw the garrison from Ostend, and unite himself, by forced marches, with an allied corps under Clairfayt, who was preparing to abandon Ghent and join the main body of the allies. On the 12th of July his Royal Highness was attacked in front of Mechlin, and the reinforcement brought him by Lord Moira alone enabled him to hold his ground. This success was temporary; a second attempt was made and repulsed; but, forced by vastly superior numbers, the allies retreated upon Antwerp. Here Lord Moira resigned his command, and immediately returned to England; and the regiments which had formed his separate corps were drafted into the different brigades and incorporated with the army of the Netherlands.

The retreat continued—first on Breda, and afterwards to Bois-le-Duc. Nothing particular occurred, excepting occasional alarms produced by affairs between the outposts, until on the 15th of September, on clearing the village of Schyndel,

the mounted pickets of the Republican army were observed drawn up upon a plain of considerable extent, skirted by a thick grove of fir-trees. The English dragoons advanced to drive them in, supported by the two regiments of guards, with the 33d and 44th, the 12th and 42d being held by Lieutenant-General Abercromby in reserve. The French hussars retired leisurely, and the British as boldly advanced, until the opening of a numerous artillery, which the Republicans had masked within the fir-wood, betrayed the immediate presence of the enemy in force, and of course rendered it necessary on the part of the assailants to fall back on their reserve. At first the regressive movement was steadily effected; but as the ground became more difficult and the road narrowed, the light cavalry got mobbed with a household battalion, and the whole were thrown into confusion. The French hussars advanced to charge, and for a minute the situation of the embarrassed troops was most alarming. Perceiving the disorder, Colonel Wellesley deployed the 33d into line immediately in rear of the household troops. Opening his centre files, he permitted the broken cavalry to retire, and then closing up his ranks again, occupied the road and held the enemy in check. The French advanced with their usual confidence; and the 33d, reserving their fire, waited coolly until the enemy were forming for a charge. At that moment the regiment received their Colonel's order, and delivered a close and searching volley, that fell with murderous effect into the crowded ranks of the Republicans, and their rapid and well-directed fusilade completed the enemy's repulse. In turn the French were obliged to fall back in confusion, and the English retreat was effected without any molestation excepting a slight cannonade, that, from its distance, was ineffective.

The British still continued retiring; and in the middle of September they occupied one bank of the Maes, while French pickets were posted on the other, the success of the

Republicans being everywhere progressive. On the 2d of December the Duke of York was recalled, and succeeded by Count Walmoden as commander-in-chief. Immediately after his appointment the Hanoverian general determined to act upon the offensive, and a combined attack by the allied forces upon those of the Republicans was arranged.

But in becoming assailant the allied commander was anticipated by the French; for on the afternoon of the 4th the enemy advanced on Meteren, which was occupied by a wing of the 33d and a squadron of hussars, with two light field-pieces, and in such force as eventually obliged Colonel Wellesley to fall back upon the British lines. The impetuosity with which the Republicans came on at first bore down all opposition, and for a moment they obtained possession of the guns. But the remainder of the 33d coming opportunely to his assistance, Colonel Wellesley was enabled to charge into the village, repulse the enemy, and retake the cannon; and although pressed closely by the infantry and threatened by the hussars, he succeeded, with trifling loss, in retiring upon the post of Geldermalsen, where, with the 42d and 78th Highlanders, the 33d maintained themselves, although efforts were repeatedly made by the Republicans, with fresh troops, to carry the place. Night ended the contest, and the French abandoned the attack after sustaining a sanguinary repulse from a force in every arm their inferior.

The inclemency of the season increased; and a threatening movement of the French on Gorcum, evincing a disposition on their part, notwithstanding the winter promised to be severe, of continuing active operations, decided General Walmoden on retiring behind the Leck, and taking a position there, extending from Wageningen to Cuylenberg. A sudden thaw, however, suspended the retreat; and to maintain their position on the Waahl, the enemy's advanced posts were attacked, and driven with some loss behind the village of Geldermalsen. But the weather changed again—the frost

set in, with heavy snow—a retreat was unavoidable, and on the 16th of January the columns commenced their march.

The sufferings endured by the British army during the continuance of this harassing movement have been frequently described by those who shared its dangers and privations. Retreats which were effected during the subsequent struggles on the Continent have thrown its horrors into the shade; but still the hardships sustained by the allies from want and cold have seldom been exceeded. A desperate season, long and rapid marches, dark nights, broken roads, and an unfriendly population, rendered this regressive movement one of the most calamitous on record. The casualties of each day's march increased alarmingly; weak men were gradually left upon the road; and the hardiest, as the retreat continued, began to lag behind, and fell into the hands of the enemy or perished for want of shelter. The commissariat was bad—the medical department worse. A military writer who was present during the whole of the retreat says—"Removing the sick in waggons without sufficient clothing to keep them warm in that rigorous season had indeed sent some hundreds to their graves; whilst the shameful neglect that then pervaded the medical department rendered the hospitals nothing better than slaughter-houses for the wounded and the sick."

On the evening of the 27th the allied columns reached Deventer after a distressing march. A halt there was imperatively called for, to afford the exhausted soldiers a period of repose. But this brief indulgence was denied; the Republicans, powerfully reinforced, and numbering, by the best information, nearly 50,000 men, were advancing by forced marches, in the full expectation of overtaking and cutting off the English brigades, whose numerical and physical inferiority appeared now to mark them out an easy conquest. On the 29th the retreat was resumed; and such stores and ammunition as could not, for want of means of transport,

be removed, were here destroyed, and thus prevented from falling into the hands of the Republicans.

Although the French, as they ever have done, proved admirable marchers, their activity was unattended by its customary success, the British rear-guard constantly presenting a steady attitude when overtaken, that averted an attack or ended in a repulse of the assailants. At last the frontier of that inhospitable country they had come to protect was passed, and a kindly welcome from the Bremeners repaid, in some degree, the ill-treatment and neglect which the gallant islanders had experienced from that "amphibious race," who had invited an alliance only to betray those who confided in their worthless professions.

In the commencement of his military career there was nothing to excite the hopes of a youthful soldier, and from Colonel Wellesley's opening campaign some experience and but little glory could be gained. The most profitable school in war is often found a rough one; but if privations are repaid by conquest, the end achieved more than compensates the labour. The disastrous campaign in Holland had no results but constant disappointment, and the tide of victory had turned against the arms of England ere Wellesley's first field was fought. Before the raw levies of the Republic the best troops in Europe were constantly receding. Step by step the British and their allies were forced from the Low Countries, everywhere the French arms were triumphant, and victory followed fast on victory, until Europe was nearly at the mercy of the Directory.

In this season of defeat, could Wellesley have imagined that, in the zenith of their fame, it was reserved for him to stay that career of conquest, and win from the victors of an hundred fields the laurels they had so profusely acquired? Such, however, was the case; and the commander of the worn-out rear-guard in Holland was destined to direct the closing charge at Waterloo!

CHAPTER II.

THE British brigades, on returning to England after their unfortunate campaign, might have been said, in the words of Francis the First, nearly to "have lost everything but their honour." In effective strength the regiments were seriously reduced; for of those who returned to their native shores a large proportion, rendered *hors-de-combat* by past suffering, were of necessity invalided and discharged. A number of the artillery horses were unserviceable; the cavalry required an extensive remount; but the threatening aspect of affairs had roused the energies of the nation, and immense exertions were consequently made to recruit the regiments to their full establishments and place the army once more in a fit state for active service. Among other corps, the 33d, after its return home, had laboured to replace the casualties of the late campaign, and Colonel Wellesley's exertions had proved so successful that in a short time his regiment was reported effective. At Poole the regiment completed its recruiting, and received orders of readiness for the East Indies. In April 1796 the 33d sailed, and after stopping for refreshments at the Cape, where their colonel, whom illness had detained, rejoined his corps, it proceeded for its destination, and disembarked at Calcutta early in February 1797.

Indian affairs were at that time in a most perilous position. The native princes were ready to revolt; and French influence was employed at their respective courts to foment the disaffection towards the English and hold out promises of assistance, and that on such an extended scale as should enable them to throw off a yoke they secretly detested, and recover the provinces of which the conquests of a century had dispossessed them. The longer duration of British dominion in the East depended on the adoption of a course of policy that should combine boldness with discretion. Sir John Shore had been recalled, and no little difficulty arose at home in finding a suitable successor. A choice, however, was happily made; and, fortunately for Britain, to the Earl of Mornington, who had rendered good service to the Ministry during his parliamentary career, the government of India was confided. The noble lord landed from La Virginie frigate on the 17th of May, and proceeding to Calcutta, was there received by the proper authorities, and inducted to his high command with the customary formalities. Lord Mornington lost no time in correctly ascertaining his existing relations with the native princes, and certainly in a position more fraught with danger no governor-general had ever been placed before.

Although the British interests were threatened on many points, the great cause of all alarm centred in the capital of Mysore. The Sultan was a deadly and a dangerous enemy. Taught from a child to detest the English, he seemed to have inherited, with the throne, his father's hatred of the British name. The war that Hyder Ali had commenced Tippoo continued, until, deprived of foreign assistance by the Treaty of Paris, he was obliged to accept terms which he had formerly declined. The splendid success that attended the invasion of Mysore in 1792, while it reduced his resources one-half, confirmed him in an undying antipathy to the conquerors. Hence the policy of his after-life

was directed to one steady purpose—the overthrow of British influence in India; and even in the visions of the night, as it afterwards appeared, he dreamed only of the destruction of the infidels.

Previous to the appointment of Lord Mornington, and while his communications with Sir John Shore were of the friendliest description, Tippoo had secretly despatched envoys to the Isle of France, to effect an alliance with the Republicans, and obtain their assistance in the grand attempt he was maturing against the English. The extent of his own military preparations could not be concealed, and the suspicions of the Presidency of Madras in consequence had been already strongly excited. But the Sultan's embassy transpired, and the whole tenor of his negotiation was disclosed by a proclamation from the French Governor of the Mauritius.

Convinced by every circumstance, that Tippoo was only manœuvring to gain time to enable him to receive the assistance and supplies promised by the French Republicans, Lord Mornington continued his preparations for war, and applied himself assiduously in strengthening his former alliances with the Nizam and the Peishwah, the two most powerful native rulers in the south of India. In a fresh treaty with the former, conditions offensive and defensive were included; and it was especially stipulated that the French mercenaries who officered the army of the Nizam should be immediately dismissed. Although the demand was acceded to, its execution was attended with considerable difficulty. But a mutiny having broken out among the Sepoys, the object was cleverly effected. A movable column was despatched from Fort William, reached Hyderabad by forced marches, and, assisted by the Nizam's cavalry, surrounded the infantry, arrested the officers, and disarmed the Sepoys. This successful blow annihilated the French influence in the Carnatic; and the intelligence of Nelson's glorious victory of the Nile (1st August 1798), which reached

Calcutta on the 31st of December, relieved the Governor-General from all apprehension of the Sultan receiving assistance from abroad. His preparations to take the field were now nearly completed; and after waiting in vain for a satisfactory answer to his remonstrance, the army was ordered to advance—a step preparatory to a formal declaration of war. Lord Mornington in person repaired to Madras, to be in more immediate communication with General Harris, the commander-in-chief.

The season in which operations in the Mysore country should commence had already set in. No reply whatever had been vouchsafed to the last letter of the Governor; and as the reduction of Seringapatam had been determined upon, the failure of Lord Cornwallis in 1791, from the sudden rising of the Cauvery, induced Lord Mornington to take a decisive step and issue a declaration of war. This was accordingly done on the 22d of February 1799.

In the November of the preceding year (1798), all the disposable troops had been assembled and encamped at Wallajahbad, under the orders of Colonel Wellesley, with whom the general superintendence remained until February following, when General Harris arrived to assume the personal command of the army, which had proceeded to Vellore. The attention which Colonel Wellesley had bestowed on the discipline and well-being of the troops, and in practising them in combined field movements, with the admirable system he adopted for supplying the bazaars, which were kept constantly well provided, attracted general notice and approbation; and when General Harris joined the army to take command, after receiving the reports of the heads of corps and departments, he was so pleased with all Colonel Wellesley's arrangements that he conceived it to be an imperative duty to publish a general order conveying commendation of the merits of Colonel Wellesley during his temporary command.

The *corps d'armée*, directed immediately against the capital of Tippoo Sultan, embraced the Carnatic, Cananore, and contingent of the Nizam. The Carnatic exceeded 20,000 men, of whom 4300 were Europeans and 2600 cavalry. The Cananore or western army numbered 6400, of whom 1600 were Europeans. The Nizam's comprised a British detachment, serving with his Highness under Lieut.-Colonel Dalrymple, 6500 strong; the same number of the Nizam's infantry, and a large body of horse. The whole might be reckoned at 16,000. Besides these, the southern Carnatic, 4000 strong, and the Baramahl corps, about 5000, marched from their respective cantonments to co-operate with the Commander-in-Chief. The Carnatic was under the immediate command of Lieutenant-General Harris; the western, or Cananore, under General Stuart; and that of the Nizam, under Colonel Wellesley; the cavalry being under the prince's minister, Meer Alum.

An Indian campaign was never opened by an army in such force or equal effectiveness. The European regiments were healthy and serviceable; and the native troops emulated the British in gallantry, and in the hour of trial were not inferior to their European comrades either in discipline or fidelity. The organisation of the Indian army was indeed perfect in every arm, and its attachment to the British Government most ardent. The progress of the grand army was, from many causes, necessarily slow. The bullock department was found quite unequal to the duties of the commissariat, which, from the enormous number of camp-followers attached to the army of the Nizam, amounting to 20,000 brinjarries[1] and at least as many servants, required such a supply of stores and provisions to be brought forward as far exceeded the means of transport the greatest exertions could procure. This host of non-combatant attendants, with

[1] *Brinjarries* were dealers in grain and rice. They followed the Indian armies with their supplies in bags, and carried by bullocks.

the immense quantity of baggage which an Indian army carries with it when it takes the field, not only embarrassed the marching of the troops, but required careful dispositions to cover it when moving through a wooded country so favourable to desultory attacks. It has been a subject of surprise why the Sultan did not avail himself more of these advantages. Without hazarding an action, he might, by constant demonstrations in front and frequent feints upon the flanks and rear, have cut off stragglers, captured stores when loosely guarded, and seriously impeded the movement of the allies towards his capital—an occurrence particularly to be dreaded, as the rainy season might shortly be expected to set in. Beyond wasting forage and provisions, destroying villages in the line of march, and occasionally showing his light cavalry in front and flank, he made but one serious attempt, and that was on the rear-guard of the Nizam. In this he so far succeeded as to cut off some seventy of the Sepoys, most of whom were killed or wounded before prompt assistance from Colonel Wellesley repulsed the assailants, and rescued the survivors of the companies. Suddenly changing his plans, however, Tippoo hurried with the *élite* of his infantry to meet the division of the West, which, from its inferior numbers, he calculated on easily defeating. Accordingly, on the 6th of March, he made a furious attack on the force under General Stuart at Seedaseer, but his troops, though immensely superior in point of numbers, were repelled, and suffered a heavy loss.

The Sultan, after his defeat, retired hastily on Periapatam, while the grand army of the Carnatic was nearing the capital by slow and steady marches. On the 24th General Harris, having crossed the Madoor, encamped on the same ground that the Mysore forces had previously occupied, and received here an official account of Tippoo's attack on the Bombay army, and his subsequent retreat. This intelligence was, for many reasons, most gratifying. With every advantage

that ground and numbers could bestow, he had suffered a signal defeat. He had commenced hostilities, the result to his army was most discouraging, and the failure of his first effort proved but an ill-omened forerunner of the closing of his own life and dynasty.

On moving from Sultanpet to Mallavelly on the morning of the 27th of March, the army of the Mysore was discovered in great force posted on some high grounds to the westward of the town. At ten o'clock Tippoo opened a distant cannonade, at the same time threatening with his cavalry the British pickets on the right. A supporting corps was pushed forward by General Harris, and a general action resulted. "The infantry line of the enemy was on commanding ground in rear of his artillery. His cavalry advanced under cover of his cannon, and a cutcherie or brigade of infantry was pushed forward in front of each flank of his line, mixed with many rocket-men. The right wing of the army, under my command, formed on the pickets of the right; Colonel Wellesley's division advanced from a considerable distance on the left, to attack the right flank of the enemy; and Major-General Floyd, with the 19th and two regiments of native cavalry, moved between these corps, the 25th dragoons and a native regiment keeping in check a body of the enemy's cavalry which had assembled on our right; while the left wing of the army, and a regiment of native cavalry, remained halted to protect our stores and baggage. The weak state of the artillery bullocks considerably retarded the advance and formation of our line, with which they were unable to keep pace. A small body of horse, profiting by this circumstance, made a daring charge on the 1st European brigade; they were received with firmness, and repulsed with considerable loss."[1] In deploying, from the irregularity of the ground, a space between the brigades was left unoccupied; and Tippoo considered that by this opening a

[1] General Harris's Despatch, Seringapatam, 5th April 1799.

cavalry attack could be attempted with success. The Sultan's horse charged with great boldness; and "many of the light cavalry succeeded in penetrating the intervals in the British line, and passing so far beyond it as to fall in with General Harris and his staff, with some of the officers of which they even exchanged pistol-shots. It is scarcely necessary to add, that to these adventurous men there was 'no return,' and that they all paid the forfeit of their temerity with their lives." [1]

The brunt of the battle was principally borne by the infantry of the Nizam and the cavalry under General Floyd, which supported them. The enemy's division exhibited considerable boldness, and advanced with a steadiness not often met with in Eastern troops. The Kerim Cutcherie, the Sultan's favourite cushoon, was particularly distinguished. Coming boldly forward and advancing in excellent order, it halted in front of the 33d, and coolly delivered its fire; the volley was returned with effect, and Coloney Wellesley's regiment lowered their bayonets and advanced. That imposing movement European troops have rarely withstood, Asiatic never. The Mussulmans wavered, broke, and turned, while Floyd's cavalry dashed into their disordered ranks, and accomplished with the sabre what the bayonet would have inevitably effected.

Tippoo witnessed the destruction of his best cushoon by a corps scarcely one-third its number; and having withdrawn his guns, abandoned the field to the conquerors. The retreat was so rapid that the Sultan's army was soon beyond the range of the British cannon; and General Harris returned to his camp, a total want of water in his front rendering it necessary to occupy the same ground on which his position on the preceding night had been taken.

The defeat of Mallavelly, following so fast on his dis-

[1] Hook.

comfiture at Seedaseer, had a marked effect upon a mind like Tippoo's, swayed, even in the most trifling concerns, by fortunate or unpromising commencements. His subsequent operations were marked by irresolution and bad judgment; and from the day of his first disaster he seemed, to use Eastern phraseology, "a doomed man." No change in the tide of his fortunes afterwards gave a hope; the destroying angel had got the word, and the Sultan's days were numbered.

On the morning of the 28th of March General Harris resumed his movements, having decided on crossing the Cauvery by the ford at Sosilay after the country in his front had been carefully reconnoitred and reported free from the presence of an enemy. He ascertained also that the Sultan had been totally mistaken as to the line of march by which the British would approach the capital; for, erroneously believing that the route of General Harris would be that of Arakery, he had despatched thither the main body of his army, determined to oppose their advance on his capital by risking a decisive battle. Tippoo's was a fatal oversight. He uncovered the best road to Seringapatam; and unchecked by the presence of an enemy, the march of the British divisions was leisurely effected. The villages through which they passed were stocked amply with provisions,—stacks of forage everywhere were standing in the fields,—not a musket was heard, and the march seemed rather a military movement through a friendly country, internally at peace, than an advance upon an enemy's capital, covered by a force of 50,000 men.

The capital of the Mysore country stands on the angle of an island formed by the junction of the rivers Cauvery and Coleroon. Its appearance was extremely imposing, as the works were of immense extent and unnecessarily massive in their construction. The fort was encompassed with two distinct walls, each having ditches, bastions, and a number

of cavaliers[1]—a species of defence in great favour with Indian engineers. On the different faces of the fort the gates were secured by numerous outworks. As a fortress Seringapatam was generally strong; but an immensity of labour and materials had been expended in useless and ill-designed defences.

The army had encamped at a distance of 3500 paces from the western face of the works, having on the right the contingent of the Nizam, *en potence*, resting on a height, and the extreme left on the Cauvery. In front there were several ruined villages and rising grounds, with an aqueduct running in an easterly direction within 1700 yards of the fort, and winding towards the right until it reached a wood or tope called the Sultan-pet. The whole of this ground was broken and irregular, affording to Tippoo's skirmishers and rocket-men a safe cover, from which the advanced pickets could be seriously annoyed. Otherwise the British camp was favourably situated; five large topes of cocoa, areka, bamboo, and other trees, furnished within the lines an abundant stock of materials for a siege, an advantage no other position near Seringapatam could have afforded. The place was now tolerably healthy, the water pure and abundant, and it possessed all the securities of an entrenched camp.

From the facility which the Sultan-pet and adjacent enclosures offered the Sultan's troops of annoyance, the broken ground in front of the position was examined by General Baird with a part of his brigade on the night of the 5th April. The whole was found unoccupied; and the General returned to the camp, "after scouring the wood in all directions," and without discovering an enemy.

Aware of its advantages, the Sultan's troops, early on the ensuing morning, reoccupied the wood and ruined village,

[1] Mounds or elevations in a fortress, which overlook and command the works immediately around them.

from both of which they kept up a teasing fusilade, with an occasional discharge of rockets. Some of the latter fell within the tents of the British encampment, and it became advisable to dislodge the enemy from the whole line of posts which they had formed amongst the enclosures.

The command of the troops was given to Colonel Wellesley; and the 33d and 2d Bengal regiments, with the 12th and two battalions of Sepoys, under Colonel Shaw, assembled at nightfall, and advanced, the one against the wood, and the other to seize the aqueduct and ruined village. Both these services were partially achieved; Colonel Shaw carried and held the village, and Colonel Wellesley forced the enclosure of the wood. The enemy, anticipating the attack, had, however, strengthened their posts, and immediately opened a tremendous fire of musketry and rockets. The night was extremely dark, and the interior of the wood, everywhere intersected with canals for irrigating the betel plants, confused the assailants, and rendered, in the deep obscurity, any advance impracticable. No alternative was left but to withdraw the troops and remove them out of fire. Unfortunately, twelve of the grenadier company of the 33d lost their way and were made prisoners; and Colonel Wellesley, who was far advanced in the wood, was struck on the knee by a spent ball, and narrowly escaped falling into the hands of the enemy, having wandered for several hours in the darkness before he could regain the camp.

On the following morning General Harris directed the attack to be renewed. To Colonel Wellesley the assault upon the Sultan-pet was again intrusted; while Colonel Shaw was directed to drive the enemy from the aqueduct, and Colonel Wallace to seize, with the flank companies of the 14th and two companies of Sepoys, a strong village which protected the right flank of the enemy's posts. The combined attack was crowned with perfect success. After a few rounds from his guns, Colonel Wellesley pushed

boldly forward, entered the wood, and having already turned it in flank, drove out the enemy, and obliged them to retire with some loss and in great disorder. Shaw's attack on the village, assisted by Colonel Wallace, who had succeeded in his object, was bravely executed; and that once seized, enabled the assailants to attack the aqueduct, the enemy's strongest hold. The attempt was made in gallant style, and the Sultan's troops were driven from all the enclosures they had strengthened, and from which they had previously caused a very serious annoyance. The enemy were thus obliged to abandon the whole line of their defences, which, reaching from the wood to the river, formed a chain of posts nearly two miles in extent.

The army of General Stuart, with large supplies, having safely reached headquarters, the siege was vigorously pressed on. A sortie, made on the morning of the 22d, had been repulsed, and a parallel opened within 750 paces of the works. The progress of the batteries was rapid; the approaches had reached within 200 paces of an entrenchment still in possession of the enemy; and on the 26th General Harris determined to drive them from that post, as a preparatory step to a closer investment of the fortress. Colonel Wellesley, commanding in turn of duty in the trenches, was ordered to direct the attack; and proper dispositions were accordingly made to storm the entrenchments at sunset. The troops ordered for the assault moved forward in two columns. During the previous hour the fire of the English batteries had been turned entirely on the enemy's works, and ceasing when the advance of the storming party was observed, it was then directed on an angle of the fort, from whose guns the assailants had most annoyance to apprehend. The attack had been arranged with excellent judgment, and was most gallantly executed. The entrenchments were stormed, occupied by the assailants, and before daylight tolerably secured from the fire of the enemy.

On the 30th a battery was unmasked, and commenced breaching the bastion; and on the 2d of May another was completed, and opened a heavy fire on the curtain to the right. Several guns of large calibre were gradually got to work; and the masonry, unable to support this well-served and sustained cannonade, began to yield. Masses of the wall came down into the ditch. A breach in the fausse-braye[1] was reported practicable, and on the 3d of May the face of the bastion was in such a state of ruin that preparations were made for an immediate assault; and in a brief letter orders to that effect were given next morning to Major-General Baird, who had volunteered to command the storming party. The troops ordered for the assault were composed of Europeans and natives. They were selected from the armies of the three Presidencies, with 200 of the Nizam's contingent, the whole amounting to 4476. The whole were placed before daylight in the trenches, and noon was properly chosen as the best hour of attack.

"At one o'clock the troops moved from the trenches, crossed the rocky bed of the Cauvery under an extremely heavy fire, passed the glacis and ditch, and ascended the breaches in the fausse-braye and rampart of the fort, surmounting, in the most gallant manner, every obstacle which the difficulty of the passage and the resistance of the enemy presented to oppose their progress. Major-General Baird had divided his force, for the purpose of clearing the ramparts to the right and left; one division was commanded by Colonel Sherbrooke, the other by Lieutenant-Colonel Dunlop. The latter was disabled in the breach, but both corps, although strongly opposed, were completely successful."[2]

[1] The *fausse-braye* is an outer work for securing the covered way and fosse. *Bastions* form the angular portions of a fortification; and *curtains* are the connecting walls which unite them with each other.

[2] Despatch of General Harris.

Although the river had been carefully examined during the preceding night, and the proper place by which the troops should effect their passage marked out by inserting stakes in the sand, Sherbrooke's column, swerving to the right, got into deep water, and the progress of the whole was retarded. Baird, observing the difficulty, rushed on close to the forlorn hope, cheered the men forward, and in six minutes the British colours were flying above the breach.

So far the assault had been successful: "the breach was won;" and the assailants, flushed with earlier advantage, pressed boldly forward; while the defenders, partially taken by surprise, were astounded to see the Cauvery crossed with little loss and the rampart carried without a check. But unforeseen difficulties were behind, which accident fortunately assisted British valour to surmount.

"When General Baird had reached the top of the breach, he discovered, to his inexpressible surprise, a second ditch, full of water, within the outer wall. The almost insurmountable difficulty of overcoming this unexpected impediment staggered him, and he exclaimed, 'Good God! how shall we get over this?' Fortunately, however, in leading the troops along the ramparts, he discovered some scaffolding which had been raised for the use of the workmen who had been repairing the wall. Having immediately taken advantage of the opportunity which thus luckily presented itself, he crossed the inner ditch, and proceeded by the ramparts to the other side of the fort, where the two columns were to meet and enter the body of the town."[1]

To those looking on, and who neither shared in the glory nor the danger of the assault, the period of suspense, though brief, was most distressing. A field-officer thus describes the feelings of the troops who were watching the result of the assault:—

[1] Hook's *Life of Baird.*

"About a quarter past one P.M., as we were anxiously peering, telescope in hand, at the ford and the intermediate ground between our batteries and the breach, a sharp and sudden discharge of musketry and rockets along the western face of the fort, announced to us that General Baird and the column of assault were crossing the ford, and immediately afterwards we perceived our soldiers, in rather loose array, rushing towards the breach. The moment was one of agony, and we continued, with aching eyes, to watch the result, until, after a short and appalling interval, we saw the acclivity of the breach covered with a cloud of crimson; and in a very few minutes afterwards, observing the file passing rapidly to the right and left at the summit of the breach, I could not help exclaiming, 'Thank God! the business is done.' . . .

"The firing continued in different parts of the place until about two o'clock or a little afterwards, when, the whole of the works being in the possession of our troops, the St. George's ensign, floating proudly from the flagstaff of the southern cavalier, announced to us that the triumph was completed."[1]

To the last hour of his life the Sultan would never believe that Seringapatam could be carried by assault, and it was only after the storming party had carried part of the ramparts, and were actually entering the body of the place, that he retired hastily, accompanied by his personal attendants.

Fatigued, suffering from intense heat, and pained by an old wound, Tippoo mounted his horse, and retreated slowly along the northern rampart. The British were momentarily gaining ground, the garrison in every direction flying, while a spattering fusilade, and occasionally a wild huzza, told that the victors were everywhere advancing. Instead of quitting the city, as he might have done, the

[1] Price.

Sultan crossed the bridge over the inner ditch, and entered the town. The covered gateway was now crowded with fugitives, vainly endeavouring to escape from the bayonets of their conquerors, who were heard approaching at either side. A random shot struck the Sultan: he pressed his horse forward, but his passage was impeded by a mob of runaways, who literally choked the gloomy arch. Presently a cross fire opened, and filled the passage with the dead and wounded. Tippoo's horse was killed, but his followers managed to disengage him, dragged him exhausted from beneath the fallen steed, and placed him in his palanquin. But escape was impossible; the British were already in the gateway; the bayonet was unsparingly at work, for quarter at this moment was neither given nor expected. Dazzled by the glittering of his jewelled turban, a soldier dashed forward and caught the Sultan's sword-belt. With failing strength Tippoo cut boldly at his assailant, and inflicted a trifling wound. The soldier, irritated by pain, drew back, laid his musket to his shoulder, and shot the Sultan dead. His companions, perceiving the struggle, rushed up; the palanquin was overturned, the bearers cut down, the body of the departed tyrant thrown upon a heap of dead and dying, and the corpse, despoiled of everything valuable, left among the fallen Mussulmans—naked, unknown, and unregarded.

Colonel Wellesley could not be persuaded, after the body was identified, that the Sultan was not still alive, so remarkably placid was the expression of his features and so life-like the appearance of his eyes; and until the Colonel had pressed the heart and pulse with his fingers, he doubted that the tiger-spirit had escaped. The corpse was given to Mussulman attendants to be prepared in proper form for the tomb; and on the evening after the assault it was laid beside his father's ashes, with the usual solemnities which distinguished the funerals of the rulers of the Mysore.

Immediately on ascertaining the capture of the city, General Harris despatched a brief letter to Lord Mornington. Great difficulty occurred in effecting its safe transmission, as the country between Seringapatam and Fort George was overrun by the adherents of the dead Sultan and hordes of those irregular banditti who infest in India the routes contiguous to scenes of war and consequently to scenes of plunder. The letter, however, was conveyed safely to its destination, hidden in a sealed quill, and intrusted to a native courier.

On the morning of the 5th Colonel Wellesley relieved General Baird, and took command of the fortress. "Cowle-flags [1] were hoisted," and notice given that severe examples would be made of any persons detected in plundering houses or molesting the inhabitants. Four men were executed for marauding; and this well-timed severity, and the extreme activity of Colonel Wellesley, speedily restored confidence and good order. Those who had fled from the city during the night of the storm took courage and returned. The bazaars were promptly opened for the sale of merchandise and provisions; and three days after the fall of Seringapatam, the main street was so crowded as to become almost impassable, and the town exhibited rather the appearance of an Eastern fair than a place so recently carried by assault.

Regarding the importance of the conquest of the capital of Mysore, no better testimony can be adduced than that of Lord Mornington, who, in a communication to the Indian Government, thus expressed his opinions:—"The fall of Seringapatam, under all the circumstances which accompanied that event, has placed the whole of the kingdom of Mysore, with all its resources, at the disposal of your Government; and the only power in India to which the French could look for assistance, or which could be deemed

[1] *Cowle*, literally "mercy," "quarter."

formidable to your interests, is now deprived of all vigour, if not entirely extinct." It was also a glorious triumph of British gallantry; and Baird ably conducted an attack in which he was most bravely supported. But let it be recollected, that there were twenty-two thousand Mussulman soldiers, "either within the fort or the dependent entrenchments," and that the assailants only reckoned four thousand five hundred bayonets. Had, therefore, the Sultan been advised by Meer Ghoffar and his French engineers, and showed himself less a fatalist and more a soldier, removed his scaffolding and retrenched the breach, the assault on the 4th could never have succeeded, and the reduction of Seringapatam would have cost more blood than Badajos, Rodrigo, or San Sebastián.

It was particularly desirable that the successful issue of the siege of the capital of Mysore should be followed up by the pacification of the country. By temperate measures this object was most likely to be achieved; and when Colonel Wellesley was appointed to the command of Seringapatam, he used every means to conciliate the adherents of the late Sultan and restore the general confidence of the Mussulman population. The surrender of Tippoo's eldest son, Futteh Hyder, of Purneah, his dewan or minister, and Meer Cummin ud Deen, assisted much in bringing round a general submission of the other sirdars. Circular letters were addressed to the commanders of the Sultan's hill forts, requiring their being surrendered up, which demand was in every instance obeyed. The army was promptly disbanded, the silledar horse retiring to their respective homes, and the French mercenaries of Lally and Chapuy being sent into the Carnatic prisoners of war.

A regular garrison having been established in Seringapatam, a commission was issued by the Governor-General to partition the conquered territories among the allies, according to preliminary treaties. But while the interests

of the allies were faithfully consulted in having portions of the late Sultan's dominions annexed to theirs, it was decided to restore the ancient rajahship over the territory that remained. Accordingly, the young Hindoo prince, whose father had been dethroned by Hyder Ali, was brought from the captivity in which he had been placed by the deceased Tippoo, to occupy the throne of his ancestors. It should be added that an extensive territory on the sea coast was annexed to the British dominions. With the inauguration of the young Rajah, the labours of the commission terminated; and it was immediately dissolved. To Colonel Wellesley the command of the Mysore was confided, and his appointment was officially announced on the 11th of September 1799.

Colonel Wellesley had now ample leisure to turn his attention chiefly to the civil administration of the extensive province over which he had been placed. He assisted in carrying into effect a proposed survey of the territories ceded to the East India Company and the Rajah, and also in permanently settling the annuities granted to those persons who had been pensioned after the fall of Seringapatam. But the insecurity of Eastern quiet has ever been proverbial; and it was to be instanced again by a sudden appearance of danger, and that from a quarter whence none could have been reasonably anticipated.

On the capture of Seringapatam several prisoners were found in the dungeons of Tippoo Sultan—a brother of his own among the number,—and they were at once liberated, without any inquiry being made into the causes of their incarceration. One of the captives thus delivered from a hopeless bondage,—for such dependent on a tyrant's caprice has commonly proved,—was a Mahratta trooper called Dhoondiah Waugh. He was a nameless man—one who had entered the service of Hyder, deserted at his death, became a freebooter, committed sundry depredations

in the Mysore, was fool enough to listen to the false promises of Tippoo, returned, was employed, suspected, imprisoned, made a Mussulman, and then left to perish in irons and a dungeon by the greater ruffian of the twain. At the capture of the fortress his fetters were stricken off; and Dhoondiah lost no time in leaving the capital of the Mysore "many a coss[1] behind him."

In a disbanded army there were many spirits like himself; and Dhoondiah Waugh found no difficulty in recruiting a numerous band. He had already gained a robber-reputation,—generally a first step, in Eastern history, to the foundation of a throne. Dhoondiah was a bold and dangerous adventurer—cruel, sordid, crafty, with great personal courage and some little military skill. In a very short time the number of his banditti had increased to an extent that rendered this daring marauder more to be dreaded than despised.

The audacity of the restless brigand becoming daily more intolerable, Colonel Wellesley decided on marching against Dhoondiah with all the disposable force he could collect in the Mysore. Although unable to overtake "the King of the Two Worlds,"[2] the activity of Colonel Stevenson's pursuit distressed the marauder sadly, and occasioned him a heavy loss. The roads were covered with his baggage, and thickly strewed with the bodies of people of all ages and sexes, and numbers of dead bullocks and camels. But Dhoondiah's career was hurrying rapidly to a close; and the following letter from Colonel Wellesley to Major Munro details the particular circumstances attending on the defeat and death of a personage for whom the sovereignty of one world was not sufficient:—"I have the pleasure to inform you that I gained a complete victory

[1] A *coss* is an irregular measure, generally about two English miles.
[2] Dhoondiah had assumed this modest appellation.

yesterday (10th September) in an action with Dhoondiah's army, in which he was killed. His body was recognised, and was brought into camp on a gun attached to the 19th dragoons. . . . The King of the World broke up on the 9th, from Malgherry, about twenty-five miles on this side of Raichore, and proceeded towards the Kistna; but he saw Colonel Stevenson's camp, returned immediately, and encamped on that evening about nine miles from hence, between this place and Burmoo. I had early intelligence of his situation, but the night was so bad, and my horses so much fatigued, that I could not move. After a most anxious night I marched in the morning, and met the King of the World with his army, about five thousand horse, at a village called Conahgull, about six miles from hence. He had not known of my being so near him in the night, had thought that I was at Chinnoor, and was marching to the westward with the intention of passing between the Mahratta and Mogul cavalry and me. He drew up, however, in a very strong position as soon as he perceived me, and the victorious army stood for some time with apparent firmness. I charged them with the 19th and 25th dragoons and the 1st and 2d regiments of cavalry, and drove them before me till they dispersed, and were scattered over the face of the country. I then returned and attacked the royal camp, and got possession of elephants, camels, baggage, &c. &c., which were still upon the ground. The Mogul and Mahratta cavalry came up about eleven o'clock; and they have been employed ever since in the pursuit and destruction of the scattered fragments of the victorious army. Thus has ended this warfare; and I shall commence my march in a day or two towards my own country."

It was fortunate for the King of the World that he exited from the stage of life so honourably. Had he been secured alive, the probability is great, from the letter of Colonel

Wellesley's instructions, that Dhoondiah's royalty would not have saved him from a rope.[1]

A circumstance most creditable to the humanity of the victor deserves to be recorded. When the baggage of the freebooter was overtaken, a beautiful boy of four years old was found, and brought to Colonel Wellesley's tent. His name was Sulabuth Khan, and he proved to be the favourite son of Dhoondiah. Not only did Colonel Wellesley afford his present protection to the orphan, but on leaving the East for Europe, he deposited a large sum of money with Colonel Symmonds, to defray the expenses of his future maintenance and education. Sulabuth grew up a handsome and intelligent youth, was placed in the service of the Rajah of Mysore, and there he continued till his death.

Colonel Wellesley, having been nominated to the command of an expedition destined to act against Batavia, the capital of the Dutch colony in Java, proceeded on the 19th December to Trincomalee, where the troops for the expedition were collected. Difficulties had arisen from the first moment the expedition had been planned; and on many points the Governor-General and Admiral Rainier seem to have misunderstood each other. Accordingly, that scheme of attempting the Dutch settlements was never ultimately carried out. After having been a month at Trincomalee, Colonel Wellesley wrote to Lord Mornington that "he had received no tidings of the Admiral," and inferred that the attack upon the Mauritius would be postponed.

Finally, founding his judgment on the contents of despatches received from the Government and "information that reached him through private channels," he decided on removing the troops to Bombay. This step was taken entirely on his own responsibility; and it is not surprising that

* "You are to pursue Dhoondiah Waugh wherever you may find him, and hang him on the first tree."—*Secretary Webbe to Col. Wellesley*, May 24, 1800.

he felt some apprehension lest this decisive measure might subject him to an imputation of independence of action not exactly compatible with proper deference to the superior authority of the Governor-General.

Colonel Wellesley's explanation, however, proved satisfactorily that he had exercised a sound discretion in quitting Trincomalee; and as the Governor-General had abandoned the intended expedition against Batavia, and turned his entire attention to effect a powerful diversion on the coasts of the Red Sea, he pressed the Colonel to accept a command under General Baird, to whom, in right of seniority, the expedition had been very properly confided.

The request of the Governor-General was cheerfully acceded to—Colonel Wellesley at once consented to take a command under General Baird; and letters which passed subsequently between these officers show with what sincerity the Colonel had determined to forget every feeling of previous disappointment and unite cordially with his rival in carrying out the objects of the intended expedition. But it was fated that he should not accompany Baird to Egypt.

"On the 3d of April, just as every arrangement was complete, he was seized with a return of intermitting fever, which had previously attacked him at Trincomalee. His anxiety to embark was with difficulty restrained by the injunctions of Mr. Scott the surgeon. He had resolved to go, and to that determination he adhered until the last moment, thinking, as he said, that the voyage would be of service to him, and that he should be completely recovered long before the expedition reached Mocha. But these expectations were, unfortunately, not realised in the sequel; and on the 5th of April, the day which General Baird had fixed for the embarkation, Colonel Wellesley was pronounced incapable of proceeding."[1]

Colonel Wellesley's recovery was tedious. The fever, as

[1] Hook's *Life of Baird.*

it frequently does in the East, occasioned a painful eruption, and consequently all idea of his being able to follow the army, which had proceeded on its destination, was abandoned. Lord Mornington, finding his brother's services rendered unavailable by bad health, restored him to his government in the Mysore; and the general order that notified his appointment, conveyed the thanks of the Governor-General to the meritorious officer who had held the intermediate command.

CHAPTER III.

IT is said that Colonel Wellesley painfully regretted the untoward event which prevented him from accompanying the Egyptian expedition. When he did, the page of destiny was closed, and he little dreamed of that brilliant career which lay immediately before him. The tranquillity of the East was overclouded again; a formidable hostility to British interests had been gaining strength among the Mahrattas; and India was once more hurrying to the customary termination of oriental diplomacy—an appeal to the sword.

To understand the progress of the campaign in the Deccan it will be necessary to keep the geographical position of the country in recollection. That part of India north of the Nerbudda is called Hindustan Proper; that between the Nerbudda and the Kistna forms the Deccan; while on the south of the Kistna lie the Carnatic, Malabar, and Mysore. From north to south, stretching from Delhi to the Toombuddra, the Mahratta territories extended 970 miles; and across the peninsula, from the Bay of Bengal to the Gulf Cambay, the breadth was about 900. The country generally was well inhabited and fertile; its population amounting to forty millions of souls, of whom nine-tenths were Hindu and the remainder Mohammedan.

This immense empire was partitioned into five separate states, all, however, united in one confederacy, and under the nominal control of the descendant of the Rajah of Sattarah. But their interests were commonly at variance; each looked on the other with suspicion and alarm; and hence a collective force of 300,000 men was in a great measure paralysed by mutual jealousies and disunion.

The empire had been founded originally by the son of the Rajah of Sattarah; but like other Indian dynasties, the feebler rule of his descendants permitted that acquired power to be usurped. The minister became Peishwah or chief magistrate, the appointment was made hereditary; and while the grandson of the founder was confined in the durance of a palace, the son of Bellagee held a court at Poonah, and actually controlled every department of the government.

The example of the Peishwah was not lost upon the other rajahs; they, too, in time, asserted their independence—still, however, in name at least, acknowledging the sovereignty of Sattarah. Of the whole, Scindiah and Holkar were the most powerful and ambitious, and, from confliction of interests, probably most opposed to each other's views. Scindiah's successes in Delhi and the Dooab had roused the ambition of his rival. The extent of his military establishment had rendered Scindiah formidable indeed; and his army was no less remarkable for its numbers than the superiority with which it had been organised. It had been originally raised and disciplined by Monsieur de Boigne, a native of Savoy, who entered the service in 1784, and formed eighteen battalions of regular infantry, which he officered with European adventurers, chiefly French. These brigades, with a body of cavalry and a train of well-appointed artillery, were drilled on the European system.

The influence of Scindiah at the court of Poonah was naturally regarded by Holkar with feelings of animosity,

the more deadly from their being from necessity concealed. To check the increasing power of the rival rajah, it was necessary that Holkar should place his army on a footing similar to that of the Peishwah. Consequently Europeans were employed to drill and command his troops, and as multitudes of military adventurers had made their way to Hindustan, they were eagerly encouraged and retained. Hence, of the three armies belonging to the Peishwah, Scindiah, and Holkar, more than three-fourths of their officers were natives of France, or mercenaries who had left the service of the Republic to seek for fortune in the East.

Although the court of Poonah had acquiesced in the war against Tippoo Sultan, it seemed indifferent regarding its success; and the secret influence of Scindiah was busily employed to impede, if possible, a final settlement of the Mysore. To induce the Peishwah to ally himself to the British Government, a portion of the Mysore, on its dismemberment, had been offered for his acceptance, at the same time similar overtures being made to Scindiah; but by both the offers were rejected. In consequence, the acquired territory was partitioned between the English and the Nizam, with the exception of that portion conferred upon the descendants of the Hindu rajahs. The refusal of the Peishwah to accept the addition thus offered to his territories evinced the unfriendliness of his disposition; and as his position, on the most vulnerable point of the British dominions, must be dreaded, the Marquis Wellesley endeavoured by fresh alliances to render Scindiah's animosity innocuous. Guickwar, chief of Guzerat, was subsidised; but the overtures made by the British Resident at Poonah to the Peishwah were declined.

At this juncture of affairs Scindiah and Holkar were at variance; and the latter having crossed the Nerbudda, advanced within a few marches of Poonah; and Scindiah's

troops, under Suddasheo Bhow, were despatched for its defence. A general engagement resulted, and the united armies of Scindiah and the Peishwah sustained a complete defeat. The Peishwah, whose conduct was most pusillanimous, abandoned his capital on the morning of the discomfiture, first soliciting British assistance through the mediation of the Resident at Poonah. His overtures were accepted; an agreement was arranged by the Resident and ratified by the Governor-General; and the British Government determined that the Peishwah's authority should be restored. An offer also was made to Scindiah to include him in the same treaty, and Colonel Collins was despatched for that purpose as a plenipotentiary. But for a long time Scindiah had been only waiting for a favourable opportunity to display his hostility to the British Government. He had been notoriously in secret correspondence with Tippoo, and it was suspected that he had been largely subsidised by the late Sultan. Holkar, on finding that the Peishwah had retired to the fortress of Mhar, in the Konkan, raised Amrut Rao to the throne of Poonah, and named his father minister, himself retaining the command of the troops, and virtually directing the government.

These occurrences in the Mahratta country of course alarmed the Governor-General, and a corps of observation was ordered to assemble on the southern frontier of the Poonah country, to secure the British possessions, as well as the territories of the Nizam and the Rajah of Mysore. In the meantime the Government at Madras had also taken the alarm, and assembled a *corps-d'armée* of 19,000 men on the north-west frontier of the Mysore. The headquarters were at Hurryhur, and the command was given to General Stuart. Indeed the note of preparation had sounded over the Indian peninsula. The Presidency of Bombay got all its disposable force ready for the field, and the

subsidiary force at Hyderabad was ordered to prepare for service.

On the 29th of April 1802 Colonel Wellesley had been gazetted a Major-General, and was appointed by Lord Wellesley to the command of a division, which was intended to form an advanced corps to the army of Madras, then on its march towards the banks of the Toombuddra. His previous acquaintance with what was required in an Indian campaign could now be turned to excellent advantage.

The opening of the campaign devolved on General Wellesley. He had been directed to advance on Poonah, in concert with the subsidiary force of the Deccan, commanded by Colonel Stevenson, to drive Holkar from the capital, and secure the return of the Peishwah. Accordingly he commenced his march from Hurryhur on the 9th of March, and crossed the Toombuddra river on the 12th. The progress of the British troops through the Mahratta territories was most successful. They were everywhere received as friends, and almost all the chiefs in the vicinity of the route of the detachment joined with their forces and accompanied the British army to Poonah. The amicable conduct of the chiefs and of the inhabitants (arising principally from the fame which the British arms had acquired in the campaign under Major-General Wellesley's command against Dhoondiah Waugh) contributed to enable our army to perform this long march, at a most unfavourable season of the year, without loss or distress.

On the 13th of May the Peishwah entered the capital, and it was hoped that Scindiah would return quietly to his own country. This hope was vain. Scindiah and the Rajah of Berar, who were together in the field, made a menacing movement towards the frontier of our ally the Nizam. Information was just at this time received of a secret and active correspondence between Scindiah and

Holkar; and it was privately known that a league, hostile to the British, was on the very eve of being concluded. Anticipating the issue of this confederacy, the Marquis Wellesley appointed General Lake to the command of the army of Hindustan; and at the same time invested him and General Wellesley with the fullest authority, military and political. No time was lost by the latter in exercising his discretionary powers. He demanded at once that Scindiah should retire behind the Nerbudda, and separate his army from that of the Rajah of Berar, undertaking that the British and native troops should immediately retire from the field and resume their ordinary cantonments.

With the usual duplicity of Eastern princes, the demand of explanation was received with specious excuses and the customary delay that attends the proceedings of Oriental diplomacy. The object was easily seen through—time was wanted to mature their plans and confederate others who were unfriendly to the British interests. General Wellesley at once penetrated their designs, and determined to render them unavailing. Having waited the result of the negotiations then in progress at the camp near Walkee, on the first intelligence of Colonel Collins having quitted Scindiah's camp, the General put the army into motion, and directed his march upon the ancient city of Ahmednuggur.

The Fort of Ahmednuggur was one of the strongest in India, built of solid stone and chunam,[1] surrounded by a deep dry ditch, with large circular bastions at short intervals, and armed with three or four guns in casemated embrasures, with a terrace above, and loop-holes for musketry. The bastions were unusually lofty, the curtains short and low, with loop-holes in their narrow ramparts for musketry. The guns (some sixty pieces) upon the bastions were numerous, ranging in their calibre from twelves to fifty-twos; but the casemates were too confined to allow their being

[1] A strong Indian cement.

effectively employed. The glacis was so abrupt as to cover nearly thirty feet of the walls, affording shelter for an enemy if they could only get close to the place.

The march of General Wellesley to Ahmednuggur had been unopposed, and on the 8th of August the army reached the place. "We had not," says Colonel Welsh, "hitherto seen the face of an enemy; and now for the first time perceived the walls of both the pettah[1] and fort lined with men, whose arms glittered in the sun, whilst another body of troops was encamped outside between them. As we stood with the General, reconnoitring from a small elevated spot within long-gun shot of both places, he directed the leaders where they were to fix their ladders; but unaware that there was no rampart, we were ordered to escalade the curtains without breaching. The fort lay on our right hand, and the pettah in front, within gun-shot of each other. The first column was ordered to attempt a long curtain to the extreme left, having a high building immediately in its rear. The ladders were planted, and the assault made, but each man as he ascended fell, hurled from the top of the wall. This unequal struggle lasted about ten minutes, when they desisted, with the loss of about fifteen killed and fifty wounded. Among the killed were Captains Duncan, Grant, Mackenzie, Humbustone, and Anderson, Lieutenant Larkins being mortally wounded. The third party to the right advanced nearly at the same moment, but a gun elephant taking fright at the firing from the fort, ran down the centre of our column, which occasioned no little confusion and some delay, thus giving the enemy more time and means to oppose the first attack. Being furnished with two scaling-ladders only, we reached the curtain, and planted them at the very re-entering angle, formed by a small bastion, the enemy opening some heavy guns on us from the fort. Such a rush was made at first

[1] A very large and regular native town,

that one ladder broke down with our gallant leader and several men, and we were forced to work hard with the other. Captain Vesey was soon on the bastion, again surrounded by men determined to carry everything before them. Our two European companies had all scrambled up, and about one hundred and fifty or two hundred of the 3d, when a cannon-shot smashed our last ladder and broke the thigh of my Subadar. We were now a party of three hundred men, left solely to our own resources, and dashing down, we scoured all the streets near the wall, the enemy only once making a stand, and suffered accordingly. At length arriving near a gate marked out for the centre attack, and a loud peal of cannon and musketry from without announcing the second party, under Colonel Wallace, we drove all the defenders before us, and some of our men opened the gate whilst they were battering at it from the outside." The enemy were driven from the town, most of them escaping to the country, and a few succeeded in entering the fort. The casualties of the Anglo-Indian army amounted to about one hundred and forty men.

On the 10th, General Wellesley commenced firing on the fort, and the Killedar proposed to treat for its surrender, requesting that while terms were under consideration the battery should cease. The British General acceded to the former part of his request; but the cannonade never slackened, except for the short time necessary to permit the guns to cool. On the next morning the Killedar sent out his vakeels or envoys; terms were made, and on the 12th the garrison marched out, and the fort was occupied by a detachment of the British army. The conquest was one of much importance. Ahmednuggur secured the communications with Poonah, and, from its central situation, became a most useful depôt. In another view its possession was desirable, it being the capital of a fertile district, which produced a considerable revenue.

When apprised that Ahmednuggur had fallen, Scindiah and the Rajah of Berar put their immense armies into motion, while Wellesley advanced towards the Godavery, and reached Toka on the 21st of August. Here the English General had decided upon crossing the river immediately below the junction of two of its most formidable streams. After a tedious and dangerous operation, which lasted from the 21st to the 28th, the passage was effected, a few men, with several horses and bullocks, having been swept down the stream and drowned. The march had been made in nineteen days without a halt, the opportune arrival of the first battalion of the 10th regiment with supplies enabled the English General to continue his advance towards the once magnificent city of Aurungabad, which he entered without opposition on the 29th.

Scindiah, on finding that Aurungabad had fallen, made a movement as if to threaten Hyderabad; and for the double purpose of protecting that city and securing large convoys on their route to join his army, General Wellesley, by marching on the eastern bank of the Godavery, effected these important objects. Hitherto the confederate chiefs had only hung upon the flanks of the English with an immense cavalry force, supported by an inconsiderable body of matchlock men, but now they were joined by sixteen battalions of regular infantry and a train of artillery amounting to nearly one hundred guns, the whole *corps d'armée*, at a moderate computation, exceeding fifty thousand fighting men.

The enemy having encamped at Boherdun, at the distance of two marches, it was determined that a combined attack should be made upon their forces without delay; and General Wellesley held a conference with Colonel Stevenson for this purpose on the 21st of September. It was arranged that the attack should be made on the 24th, the armies advancing in two divisions, to avoid the delay

that must otherwise occur, by moving *en masse* through a narrow and difficult defile. Accordingly, on the 22d Colonel Stevenson marched by the western route, while General Wellesley took an easterly direction, following the more direct road which leads round the hills between Budnapoor and Jalna. On the 23d the Major-General arrived at Naulniah. The native scouts announced that the confederated chiefs had retired with the whole of their cavalry that morning, leaving their infantry to follow, who were, however, still encamped at the distance of two leagues. This intelligence, which afterwards proved untrue, induced Wellesley to attack the enemy without delay. Leaving his baggage with a rear-guard, reinforced by the 1st battalion of the 2d regiment, under Lieutenant-Colonel Chalmers, and having despatched messengers to hurry the movements of Colonel Stevenson, he resumed his operations, and at noon he found himself, after a severe march, most unexpectedly in front of the entire of the Mahratta armies.

The position of the allied chiefs extended from Boherdun to the village of Assye, having the Kaitna in their front; and from the steepness of its banks, that river was impassable to carriages, except at the fords of Peepulgaum and Warson. Nothing could be more picturesque than the appearance of the Mahratta camp—nothing more imposing than the multitudinous force drawn up in order of battle. "The sight was enough to appal the stoutest heart. Thirty thousand horse in one magnificent mass crowded the right; a dense array of infantry, powerfully supported by artillery, formed the centre and left; the gunners were beside their pieces, and a hundred pieces of cannon in front of the line stood ready to vomit forth death upon the assailants. Wellesley paused for a moment, impressed but not daunted by the sight; his whole force, as Colonel Stevenson had not come up, did not exceed eight thousand men, of whom sixteen hundred were cavalry; the effective native British

were not above fifteen hundred; and he had only seventeen pieces of cannon."[1]

As the British cavalry came up, they formed line on the heights, and presented a strange but glorious contrast to the countless multitude of Mahratta horsemen who were seen in endless array below. The English brigade, scarcely numbering sixteen hundred sabres, took its position with all the boldness of a body having an equal force opposed, although in number Scindiah's cavalry were fully ten to one.

The columns having arrived, Wellesley changed his original intention of attacking the enemy's right, and determined to fall upon the left, which was composed entirely of infantry. The ground on which these battalions were drawn up was a flat peninsula of inconsiderable size, formed by the union of the waters of the Kaitna with the Juah. The space was too confined to allow room for the Mahratta cavalry to operate to much advantage, "while the defeat of the corps of infantry was most likely to be effectual." Accordingly, a lateral movement was made to the left, the march of the column being covered on the right flank by the Mysore horse, and in the rear protected by the British cavalry, under Colonel Maxwell.

Having crossed the ford of Peepulgaum, which the enemy had neglected to defend, the British infantry were formed in two lines, supported by the cavalry, which were placed in line in reserve in the rear, on an open space between the Kaitna and a nullab that ran in a parallel direction with its stream. While deploying, the Mahratta guns kept up a furious cannonade; but undisturbed by a fire that was ably directed and well-sustained, the British dispositions for attack were coolly and promptly completed.

"The order of battle being thus skilfully changed, the infantry of Scindiah was compelled to present a new front. They did so with greater ease than was expected. The line

[1] Alison.

they now formed reached with its right up to the Kaitna, and its left upon the village of Assye on the Juah. The front now presented by the enemy was one vast battery, especially towards the left, so numerous and weighty were the guns, and so thickly were they disposed immediately near the village. The fire was rapid, furious, and terrible in execution: the British guns, few in number, opened as the line advanced, but were almost on the instant silenced. Their gunners dropped fast, and the cattle fell, killed or lacerated, beside them. With the fierceness of the struggle, and the fearfulness of the hazard, the undaunted spirit of the General rose. He at once abandoned the guns, and directed an advance with the bayonet: with the main body he soon forced and drove the enemy's right, possessing himself of their guns by a resolute charge."[1]

The pickets, with the 74th as a supporting regiment, were on the right of the two lines of infantry, and their attack was distinguished equally by the gallantry it exhibited and the loss it produced. With unquestioned bravery but bad judgment, the officer commanding, when he might have covered his men in a great degree by a circuitous movement, pushed forward directly against the village of Assye, thus of necessity crossing "a space swept like a glacis by the cannon of the enemy." Overwhelmed by a murderous fire, the gallant band left half its number on the field. The men fell by dozens, and one company of those forming the pickets was almost annihilated. It went into action with an officer and fifty men; and in the evening four rank and file were all that survived that bloody day.

No wonder that the line under this tremendous fusilade from the village, supported by continuous showers of grape, was in many places fairly cut through, and that with difficulty it still maintained its ground. Perceiving its disorder, a cloud of Mahratta horsemen stole round the enclosures of

[1] Sherer.

THE BATTLE OF ASSYE.

Life of Wellington, p. 46.

Assye unperceived, and charged furiously into ranks already half destroyed. The moment was most critical. The Mahratta sabres were crossing the bayonets of the 74th, and "feeble and few, but fearless still," that gallant regiment was desperately resisting. Colonel Maxwell, who had watched the progress of the fight, saw that the moment for action had arrived. The word was given, the British cavalry charged home. Down went the Mahrattas in hundreds beneath the fiery assault of the brave 19th and their gallant supporters the Sepoys; while, unchecked by a tremendous storm of grape and musketry, Maxwell pressed his advantage, and cut through Scindiah's left. The 74th and the light infantry rallied, re-formed, pushed boldly on, and the second line coming forward to their support, completed the disorder of the enemy, and prevented any effective attempt to renew a battle, the doubtful result of which was thus in a few minutes decided by the promptitude of that well-directed charge.

Some of Scindiah's troops fought bravely; the desperate obstinacy with which his gunners stood to the cannon was almost incredible. They remained to the last, and were bayoneted around the guns, which they refused, even in certain defeat, to abandon.

The British charge was resistless; but in the enthusiasm of success, at times there is a lack of prudence. The Sepoys rushed wildly on—their elated ardour was uncontrollable,—while a mass of the Mahratta horse were arrayed on the hill, ready to rush upon ranks disordered by their own success. But General Wellesley had foreseen and guarded against the evil consequences a too excited courage might produce. The 78th were kept in hand, and supported by a regiment of native horse, they were now led forward by the general in person. The guns on the left were carried, and the village stormed with the bayonet. In this short but sanguinary attack the 78th were highly distinguished. Their

loss, from the severity of the enemy's fire, was severe, and General Wellesley had a horse killed under him.

A strong column of the enemy that had been only partially engaged, now rallied and renewed the battle, joined by a number of Scindiah's gunners and infantry, who had flung themselves as dead upon the ground, and thus escaped the sabres of the British cavalry. Maxwell's brigade, who had re-formed their ranks and breathed their horses, dashed into the still-disordered ranks of these half-rallied troops. A desperate slaughter ensued; the Mahrattas were totally routed; but the British cavalry lost their chivalrous leader, and in the moment of victory Maxwell died in front of the battle, pressing on the pursuit of a mingled mob of all arms, who were flying in disorder from the field.

The rout was now complete. The sun at noon had shone on a proud array of fifty thousand men, drawn up in perfect order; he set upon a broken host, flying in dispersed bodies from a field on which the whole *materiel* of an army remained abandoned. Under more desperate circumstances a battle was never fought; and, opposed by overwhelming masses, a victory was never more completely won. Everything at noon was against the conquerors. Numbers, position, all that could render victory almost a certain event, lay with the Mahratta chieftains. Small as the British force was, its energies were weakened by a long and exhausting march beneath a sultry sky; and nothing but indomitable courage could have sustained Wellesley's feeble battalions against the mighty masses to which they were opposed. Assye was indeed a glorious triumph. It was a magnificent display of skill, moral courage, and perfect discipline against native bravery and enormous physical superiority. Nor were Scindiah's troops a body of men rudely collected, ignorant of military tactics, and unused to combinations. In every arm the Mahratta army was respectable; and the facility with which they changed their front in the morning, proved that

the instructions of their French officers had not been given in vain.

The loss of the Mahrattas could never be correctly ascertained, but it was computed that they left two thousand dead upon the field, and that their wounded exceeded thrice that number. Several standards, and nearly the whole of their artillery, fell into the hands of the conquerors; and when they halted twelve miles from the scene of their defeat, they had no cannon, and scarcely any ammunition, the tumbrils having been deserted or blown up. On the first intelligence that Colonel Stevenson (who reached the field of battle next morning) was advancing in force, the routed divisions fled precipitately down the Ghauts, and easily evaded a pursuit, which the feebleness of the victors and their own immense superiority in cavalry rendered unavailing.

When the last of the enemy had disappeared, such of the cavalry as were fit for duty were sent back to Nulliah by moonlight, to bring up the camp equipage and baggage. This partial detachment, with the immense proportion of the little army, rendered in the action *hors de combat*, reduced Major-General Wellesley's force to a mere handful; and the field of Assye, from which fifty thousand combatants had been driven at sunset, was held during the succeeding night by a force not exceeding fourteen hundred men!

While these important events were being transacted in the Deccan, the operations simultaneously carried on by General Lake and the other officers who commanded separate corps in Northern India were equally successful. In a short and brilliant campaign, the chief events of which were the battle of Laswaree and the capture of Delhi, General Lake annihilated the immense military resources of the ambitious slipper-bearer,[1] and checked the influence of France, which

[1] The family of this chief was exceedingly obscure. Scindiah's father had been a husbandman, and his rise was singularly accidental.

had made extensive progress already, and that, too, in the very heart of Hindustan. The territories of Cuttack and Gujerat were annexed to the Indian dominions of the British government.

The victory of Assye was followed up by General Wellesley with his customary activity. Colonel Stevenson was detached to harass the ruins of Scindiah's army, and afterwards reduce the fortresses of Burhampoor and Asseerghur. The General himself was prevented moving from the neighbourhood of his victory, as the greatest difficulty was experienced in obtaining means of transport for his wounded; and no consideration could induce him to "leave his brave fellows exposed in an open town." Colonel Stevenson's operations were attended with complete success, and the objects at which General Wellesley aimed fully accomplished. On the 16th of October the Colonel took possession of Burhampoor without opposition, marched to Asseerghur on the 17th, took possession of the pettah on the 18th, opened a battery against the fort on the 20th, and obtained possession of it on the morning of the 21st.

And yet it was a strange position in which General Wellesley found himself, one of great embarrassment, and involving a serious responsibility. Every step he took

When a private soldier in the guard, he had been left by his master at the outer door of the zenana in charge of the Peishwah's slippers. Scindiah was discovered on the return of the Rajah fast asleep, but with the slippers clasped closely to his bosom. This trait of fidelity in the discharge of a very humble duty attracted the attention of the monarch, and secured his ultimate advancement.

"When Scindiah was at the head of sixteen regular battalions, a hundred thousand horse, and two hundred pieces of cannon, he placed himself at the court of the Peishwah, below all the hereditary nobles of the state, declined to sit down in their presence, and untying a bundle of slippers, said, 'This is my occupation: it was my father's.'"—Alison's *History of Europe.*

required the deepest consideration. His operations were defensive or aggressive, as circumstances varied; and, while with one wing of his little army he reduced the strongholds of the enemy, he was obliged, with the other, to secure an extensive frontier, penetrable on every point, and with no resisting means beside his own on which for a moment he dare place dependence. In writing officially to Major Shawe, he thus describes his singular position:—"Since the battle of Assye, I have been like a man who fights with one hand and defends himself with the other. With Colonel Stevenson's corps I have acted offensively, and have taken Asseeghur; and with my own I have covered his operations, and defended the territories of the Nizam and the Peishwah. In doing this, I have made some terrible marches, but I have been remarkably fortunate; first, in stopping the enemy when they intended to press to the southward, through the Casserbury Ghaut; and afterwards, by a rapid march to the northward, in stopping Scindiah when he was moving to interrupt Colonel Stevenson's operations against Asseerghur, in which he would otherwise have undoubtedly succeeded."

Convinced, however, from the best sources through which he gleaned his information, that a great desertion had taken place in Scindiah's cavalry, and that this, added to the ruin of his infantry at Assye, would prevent any dangerous movement by that chief, watched closely as he was by Colonel Stevenson's division, General Wellesley found himself at last authorised in recommencing active operations; and accordingly he turned his attention to the Rajah of Berar, who had moved to the southward on a predatory expedition. On the 25th of October—for with Wellesley to plan and to execute were simultaneous—he broke up his camp.

Having received authentic information touching the movements of the Rajah of Berar, and clearly ascertained that

he had traversed the hill country that forms the boundary of Candeish on his route to the banks of the Godavery, General Wellesley ascended the Adjuntee Ghaut, and marching southward, passed Aurungabad on the 29th.

The admirable judgment which Major-General Wellesley evinced in the vigorous but cautious system of warfare he adopted produced the results he had anticipated. The immense numerical forces of the Mahratta chieftains became daily more difficult to keep together when forced back upon their own frontiers, and obliged to seek those supplies at home that hitherto they had acquired by marauding on their neighbours. After some weeks marching and counter-marching, Scindiah, disgusted with a war in which no plunder was to be obtained, and of which the burden as well as danger fell entirely on his own dominions, made proposals for peace, and these overtures ended in an armistice from which the Rajah of Berar was excluded. Whatever objects the Mahratta chief might have had in view by obtaining a cessation of hostilities, it was decidedly politic in General Wellesley to effect it if he could; for thus he would sever the confederacy, and be placed in a position to crush his enemies in detail. He was well aware of the insincerity of his opponent; and never doubted but that the armistice was designed by Scindiah to serve an end, and that its conditions would be observed or violated just as his interest should require.

On forwarding to Colonel Stevenson the conditions attached to the armistice, the Major-General directed that Scindiah, if moving to the eastward of Ellichpoor, should pass unmolested; but should he march westward, the Colonel was authorised to attack him. In the letter of the Deputy-Adjutant-General which conveyed the order, the following extract shows the kind and manly feelings which the General entertained for the brave old soldier with whom he had so long and so successfully co-operated :—

"The General's principal reason for agreeing to the suspension of hostilities with Scindiah was, that the siege of Gawilghur might be uninterrupted by him; and the General begs that you will order every preparation to be made for commencing it immediately on your arrival, and carrying it on with the utmost celerity and activity. But as he observes with much concern, from Captain Johnson's letter, that you are very much weakened and reduced by your late indisposition, he begs that you will not risk your life in the arduous undertaking of the siege of Gawilghur if you do not find your strength equal to conducting the operations of it; and if you find yourself too weak for that, he will change situations with you for the period of the siege, by his joining the subsidiary force while you take the command of this division."

But, reduced as he was by bodily infirmity, the spirit of the soldier was unbroken, and Colonel Stevenson declined the exchange; and on the 25th of November the Major-General descended the Rajoora Ghauts to cover the investment of Gawilghur and the intended operations against Berar. Scindiah, who had never designed to carry into effect that condition in the armistice which obliged him to withdraw his army forty miles east of Ellichpoor, was encamped at Sersooly, in direct communication with Manoo Bappoo, then commanding the forces of his brother, the Rajah of Berar. On the 28th Colonel Stevenson judiciously halted at Huttee Andorah to enable Wellesley to come up, and on the 29th both corps united at the village of Parterley.

But Scindiah had already moved off; and from the tower of Parterley a countless mass of horsemen, supposed to be his rear guard, half hidden by a cloud of dust, were seen retiring over a rising ground two miles beyond the village of Sersooly. From the distance they had gained, and the fatigue his troops had undergone, General Wellesley

despaired of overtaking them, and determined to halt and encamp till evening; but the circumstances detailed in his despatch to the Governor-General brought on an action that placed another laurel on his brow, and annihilated Scindiah's power.—" . . . From a tower in Parterley I could perceive what I concluded to be the enemy on the march. The troops had marched a great distance on a very hot day, and I therefore did not think it proper to pursue them; but shortly after our arrival here, bodies of horse appeared in our front, with which the Mysore cavalry skirmished during a part of the day. When I went out to push forward the pickets of the infantry to support the Mysore cavalry, and to take up the ground of our encampment, I could perceive distinctly a long line of infantry, cavalry, and artillery, regularly drawn up on the plains of Argaum, immediately in front of that village, and about six miles from this place, at which I intended to encamp. Although late in the day, I immediately determined to attack this army. Accordingly I marched on in one column, the British cavalry leading in a direction nearly parallel to that of the enemy's line, covering the rear and left by the Mogul and Mysore cavalry.

"The enemy's infantry and guns were on the left of their centre, with a body of cavalry on their left. Scindiah's army, consisting of one very heavy body of cavalry, was on the right, having on its right a body of pindarries and other light troops. Their line extended about five miles, having in their rear the village and extensive gardens and enclosures of Argaum, and in their front a plain, which, however, was much cut up by water-courses, &c.

"I formed the army in two lines; the infantry in the first, the cavalry in the second, and supporting the right; and the Mogul and Mysore cavalry the left, nearly parallel to that of the enemy; with the right rather advanced, in order to press upon the enemy's left. Some little time

elapsed before the lines could be formed, owing to a part of the infantry of my division which led the column having got into some confusion. When formed, the whole advanced in the greatest order. The 74th and 78th regiments were attacked by a large body (supposed to be Persians), and all these were destroyed. Scindiah's cavalry charged the 1st battalion 6th regiment, which was on the left of our line, and were repulsed; and their whole line retired in disorder before our troops, leaving in our hands thirty-eight pieces of cannon and all their ammunition.

"The British cavalry then pursued them for several miles, destroyed great numbers, and took many elephants and camels, and much baggage. The Mogul and Mysore cavalry also pursued the fugitives, and did them great mischief. Some of the latter are still following them; and I have sent out this morning all of the Mysore, Mogul, and Mahratta cavalry, in order to secure as many advantages from this victory as can be gained, and complete the enemy's confusion.

"For the reason stated in the commencement of this letter, the action did not commence till late in the day, and, unfortunately, sufficient daylight did not remain to do all that I could have wished; but the cavalry continued their pursuit by moonlight, and all the troops were under arms till a late hour in the night."

General Wellesley followed up his decisive success at Argaum by instantly advancing to besiege the fortress of Gawilghur, which is situated in a range of mountains between the sources of the rivers Poonah and Taptee. The heavy ordnance and stores were dragged by hand over mountains and through ravines for nearly the whole distance, by roads which had been previously necessary for the troops to make for themselves. Three batteries were erected, and the fire of all these opened on the 13th in the morning. On the 14th at night, the breaches in the walls of the outer

fort being practicable, the wall of the inner fort was carried by a storming party of the 94th regiment.

It had been generally supposed that Gawilghur would have proved a very lucrative conquest; but the property found in the fortress did not realise the expectations of the besiegers; and although pioneers were left by the Major-General to assist the prize-agents in searching for concealed treasure, nothing of great value was subsequently discovered. After the assault, the moderation displayed by the victors to the garrison and inhabitants was truly honourable to British discipline and humanity, and elicited a commendatory notice from General Wellesley.

The defeats of Assye and Argaum—the fall of a place hitherto considered impregnable,—and the uniform success which over the peninsula of Hindustan had attended the banners of England whenever they were unfurled, proved to the Mahratta princes that their only chance of safety must spring from conditional submission. Negotiations were accordingly resumed; and so necessary was it considered by the Rajah of Berar that terms of amity between himself and the Company should be promptly restored, that the procrastination which generally distinguishes Eastern diplomacy was in this case avoided, and in two brief days a treaty was framed and subsequently ratified. Nothing could be more advantageous to Great Britain than the terms on which this pacification was effected.

When intelligence of the success of the Indian armies reached England, the thanks of Parliament were voted to the Governor-General, and to the commanders, officers, and soldiers which had shared in the glory of the contest; and a despatch from Lord Castlereagh, dated the 19th of May 1804, and received overland on the 14th of the following October, apprised the Governor-General that an honourable distinction had been conferred by the British Parliament upon the troops his lordship had so success-

fully employed. In a subsequent communication from the Colonial Office, Lord Camden acquainted the Marquis Wellesley how highly the services of Generals Lake and Wellesley had been appreciated by their royal master.

"The brilliant and decisive success that has attended the progress of the armies which have been employed in the East Indies under the command of General Lake and Major-General Wellesley, is justly appreciated by his Majesty; and I have in consequence received his Majesty's commands to inform your lordship, that in consideration of the meritorious services and gallant conduct of General Lake, his Majesty has been graciously pleased to create him a peer of the United Kingdom of England and Ireland;[1] and that, in consideration also of the eminent and brilliant services of Major-General Wellesley, his Majesty has been graciously pleased to direct that the insignia of the most honourable Order of the Bath should be transmitted to that officer; and that he may immediately evince his sense of Major-General Wellesley's merits and services, his Majesty has further directed that he shall be created an extra Knight Companion of that Order, and that his creation and investiture shall not wait for a succession to a regular vacancy therein."

General Wellesley had for some time expressed an anxious wish to retire from his command in the Mysore. While the war with Holkar was being carried on by a skilful distribution of the army of the Deccan, the Mahratta chiefs, whose loyalty was very questionable, were completely overawed, and with every inclination to be troublesome, they were necessitated to remain pacific. General Wellesley had many causes of complaint: he was disliked by the Peishwah, his measures were sometimes rendered inoperative by restrictions of the government; and occasional

[1] The titles of Lord Lake were Baron Lake of Delhi and Laswaree.

notices in his despatches show that he felt these annoyances. In one letter he says—

"I think we are shaking a little at Madras. I hear that the arrangement I had made in the bullock department, although the only one that could keep it and consequently the army together, is disapproved of and is to be altered after the campaign. All this is very well; but the government, upon the present scale, cannot be carried on as it has been if confidence be not placed in the persons employed, and if they and their acts are liable to misrepresentation in their absence." In another he remarks—"I think it desirable that I should soon quit this country. The Peishwah has manifested a most unaccountable jealousy of me personally; and has refused to adopt certain measures evidently calculated for his advantage, only because I recommended them. He has allowed their benefit, and has avowed this motive for refusing to adopt them. We have always found it very difficult to manage him, but it will become quite impossible if this principle is allowed to guide his conduct. I therefore think it best that I should go away as soon as possible; and I am certainly very desirous of getting some rest."

Whether from these causes, or that "he was prompted to return to Europe by that hidden law which so often makes the temporary vexations of men, selected by Providence for special purposes, the means of turning them into their appointed theatre, he felt the influence of that mysterious yearning, which, even in the midst of honours and power, prompts the destined actors in great events to pant for higher glories."[1]

When it was officially announced that General Wellesley had determined to return to England, addresses were voted by numerous public bodies; and a magnificent vase was presented to him by the commanding officers and heads of

[1] Alison.

departments attached to the army of the Deccan. Among other testimonials of esteem, none were more affectionate than one presented to General Wellesley by the native inhabitants of Seringapatam; as in the simple language of the East it breathed the most ardent prayers to "the God of all castes and colours" for his future prosperity and glory.

CHAPTER IV.

IMMEDIATELY on his return to England Major-General Wellesley was appointed to a staff command. To his new duties he applied himself with assiduity; and the fine order and superior discipline of his brigade showed how contentedly, after commanding an army in the field, he turned his attention to the humbler services his country had now required from him.

The Marquis Cornwallis, who succeeded the Marquis Wellesley in the government of India, held it but a short time, dying on the 5th of October 1805, at Ghazypoor, near Benares. By his demise, the colonelcy of the 33d Regiment became vacant, and Major-General Wellesley succeeded the Marquis, having been lieutenant-colonel of that corps for nearly thirteen years.

Shortly before he obtained his regiment, the Major-General was returned to Parliament for the borough of Rye. He was soon obliged to come forward in the House of Commons and defend his brother, the Marquis Wellesley, whose administration in India was disapproved by a very small minority. On the 10th of April 1806 he married Catherine, third daughter of Edward Michael, second Earl of Longford. Two sons were the issue of this marriage—Arthur, Marquis of Douro, born the 3d of February 1807,

in Harley Street, London; and Charles, born at the Chief Secretary's lodge, near Dublin, 16th January 1808.

In 1807, when the Portland administration came into power, the Duke of Bedford was removed from the Irish Lieutenancy, and the Duke of Richmond appointed his successor. The important situation of Chief Secretary having been offered to Sir Arthur Wellesley, he accepted it conditionally, "that it should not impede nor interfere with his military promotion or pursuits," and repairing immediately to Dublin Castle, he undertook the duties of his laborious and responsible appointment. Many of his old friends, with whom he had been intimate before he quitted Ireland for the East, hailed his return with delight. The same unassuming carriage, the same facility of approach, was then as characteristic of the successful General as it had been of the young aide-de-camp in 1792, then the *attaché* of a court, and one who had only "heard of battles." "He was in all material traits still Sir Arthur Wellesley, but it was Sir Arthur Wellesley judiciously improved."[1]

The state of Ireland when the new Secretary revisited his native land was exceedingly disturbed, and it was deemed advisable, for the security of the kingdom, to arm the executive with great additional powers. With that intent the Insurrection Bill was framed; and the introduction of this strong measure met with considerable opposition; for, if confided to unsafe or dishonest hands, its workings would be most dangerous, and the rights and liberties of all might be materially endangered. But these extended powers with which the Irish Secretary was intrusted appear to have been employed with singular moderation; for one politically opposed to the Government of that day observed, "that the public acts of the Irish executive were generally distinguished by impartiality and good sense."[2]

The organisation of an efficient police was another

[1] Sir Jonah Barrington. [2] Ibid.

measure that emanated from Sir Arthur. The old system was full of abuse, and it was "calculated to afford protection to none but malefactors." Though strongly opposed, the Irish Secretary succeeded in introducing a measure by which the services of a body of men calculated to preserve the lives and properties of the citizens were permanently obtained. Experience has proved how admirable this change was from what for years "had been a nuisance and a disgrace to the Irish metropolis."

In the spring of 1807 an expedition, which has been reprobated for its injustice by one party and praised for its salutary results by another, was directed to be got in readiness with all possible despatch. Its operations were intended against the Danish capital, and its object was to obtain a temporary possession of a formidable fleet then lying in the basins of Copenhagen. The facility with which Denmark submitted to Napoleon's decree against British commerce, induced many to believe that a demand of the possession of her fleet and dockyards might be acceded to without any very serious opposition. Other circumstances made the neutrality of Denmark rather questionable. The Crown Prince was particularly anxious to retain his continental possessions, and these lay completely at the mercy of Napoleon. A French party was strong about his court, and the Emperor's threat, it was supposed, had not been forgotten by this independent sovereign—"Let that little prince take care, or I shall teach him how to act." It was determined that the navy of Denmark should not be added to the enormous resources of Napoleon, and with immense despatch and profound secrecy, the means were completed for obtaining its possession. A powerful fleet, accompanied by an army of 20,000 men, was got ready for service; the former commanded by Admiral Gambier, the latter by Lord Cathcart. The objects of the expedition were kept so secret, that the greater portion of the armament was at sea

before its destination was suspected. On the 4th of August, the fleet anchored between the Castle of Cronenberg and the capital, and on the 12th the German legion joined from Pomerania.

Negotiation was unsuccessfully tried; and on the 15th Mr. Jackson, the British *chargé d'affaires*, announced that any accommodation which might remove the causes of England's suspicion was hopeless. The army was consequently landed between Elsinore and Copenhagen on the 16th, and the fleet brought closer to the city. It advanced in three columns, slightly annoyed by the fire of the Danish gunboats, and by detached parties of troops, who were, however, repelled wherever they attempted to attack. On the 19th the post of Fredericks werk was surprised, and its garrison of eight hundred and fifty men made prisoners, and on the 24th the right wing invested the city, and commenced erecting mortar batteries for its bombardment.

The Danes had, in the meantime, been collecting their regular troops and militia under General Carstenkiold, and he had been reinforced by four regiments commanded by General Ozhoken. It became necessary that this force should be dispersed, and General Wellesley, with Generals Linsengen and Stuart, and a corps of sufficient strength, was detatched by Lord Cathcart to effect this service. In this the Major-General succeeded, causing great loss to the enemy.

The siege was now vigorously pressed, and the works, unchecked in their progress by the feeble resistance made by the musketry of the city and the fire from the praams and gunboats, were completed. After summoning the garrison, on the evening of the 2d the batteries and bomb vessels opened, and the town was speedily in flames. On the night of the 3d the fire slackened, to allow General Peyman an opportunity to capitulate; but the Danish Governor was obstinate, and on the evening of the 4th

the bombardment recommenced more furiously than ever. On the 5th the place was everywhere wrapped in flames, and the destruction of the town appeared inevitable. The white flag was then displayed, and after a short delay an armistice was concluded. The great object of the expedition was thus obtained, for the fleet and naval stores were yielded to the conquerors.

The loss sustained by the British was comparatively trifling. Of the land forces, two hundred were rendered *hors de combat*, while the casualties of the navy scarcely exceeded fifty. The fine fleet and immense quantity of naval stores contained in the dockyards at Copenhagen would have afforded Napoleon ample means for effecting his threatened descent upon the coasts of England or Ireland. Sixteen sail of the line, nine frigates, fourteen sloops, and many smaller vessels were brought away. The ships were laden with masts, spars, and cordage, besides which ninety transports were filled with naval stores; and of five vessels on the stocks, two were taken to pieces and brought to England, and the remainder destroyed. On the 13th, according to treaty, the embarkation of the troops commenced; on the 18th, it was completed; and on the 20th the last English guard in the citadel was relieved by a Danish detachment, and the fleet and army quitted the shores of Zealand.[1]

On his return home, Sir Arthur Wellesley resumed his Irish secretaryship. The manner in which the business of his department was carried on appeared to have given

[1] Lord Roslyn had brought with him a favourite mare, which he rode occasionally during the operations in Zealand. After her safe return to England this mare had a foal, which was destined to be more famous than its parent. The colt was named "Copenhagen;" and that horse carried the Duke of Wellington throughout the glorious day of Waterloo. Full of honour and of years, Copenhagen died in 1835 at Strathfieldsaye.

universal satisfaction. But the time had now arrived when the hero of Assye was required to serve his country in a sphere more suited to his talents.

Napoleon Buonaparte, "the scourge and wonder of an age," had raised a mighty empire on the ruins of a republic; his power and glory were at their zenith; the movements of his armies were but a march to victory; half Europe was at his feet, and thrones and kings rose and fell at his dictation. With one solitary exception, all cowered before the magic of his name; and while her political horizon became every hour more heavily overcast, Great Britain maintained with inflexible resolution the attitude she had from the first assumed. It seemed that Europe had ceased to have the wish or the power to oppose his views; and men began to speculate as to what new designs the inordinate ambition of the soldier-king should be directed. Would he subjugate Turkey, partition it and Greece among his satellites, and thus, safe from the thunders of a British fleet, secure a passage into Egypt, and eventually reach the heart of Hindustan? But the part of Charlemagne, and not that of Alexander, was to be enacted by the French Emperor. Spain and Portugal were the objects at which he aimed. One was corrupt, the other helpless; both he believed almost within his grasp, and in idea he was already master of the Spanish Indies and Brazil. He now determined to carry into effect his dearly-cherished project of placing a member of his own family upon the throne of Spain, which he had rendered vacant by his intrigues. His choice fell upon his brother Joseph, who was reigning at Naples. Joseph entered Madrid on the 20th of July 1808, and on the 24th he was proclaimed King of Spain and the Indies. But the Spaniards had already risen in insurrection against the French, and in less than a fortnight Joseph was driven from the capital.

A considerable force had been collected at Cork in the

spring of 1808; and public conjecture assigned it very opposite destinations. The general belief was that it was destined to act against the Spanish possessions in South America, and such was the original intention. Fortunately, another and more glorious scene of action was its destiny. Lieutenant-General Wellesley was selected for its command; and while a letter from the Duke of York conveyed the king's order for assuming the appointment, another despatch from Lord Castlereagh explained the objects generally which Government had in view in sending, or holding in readiness, all their disposable troops in Britain for service in the Peninsula, "the entire and absolute evacuation of the Peninsula by the troops of France being, after what has lately passed, the only security for Spanish independence, and the only basis upon which the Spanish nation should be prevailed upon to treat or lay down their arms."

With his accustomed promptitude Lieutenant-General Wellesley prepared for an immediate departure. His new appointment was more germane to his feelings than wasting the summer of his youth in the dull details of official correspondence. On reaching Cork he was delayed a few days waiting for transports, the 20th Light Dragoons, and horses for the artillery. On the evening of 9th July the embarkation was completed, but contrary winds prevented it from leaving the harbour. On the 12th, however, the whole got under weigh, and on the 13th was clear of the Irish land. Here, in obedience to orders previously received, Sir Arthur Wellesley parted company with the fleet, and leaving the "Donegal," in which vessel he had embarked, sailed direct in the "Crocodile" frigate for Corunna, where he arrived on the 20th; and according to his instructions from Lord Castlereagh, he put himself into immediate communication with the Junta of Gallicia.

Immediately after his interview with the Gallician deputies, Sir Arthur proceeded to Oporto, where the Supreme

Junta of Portugal was collected. He was cordially received by the bishop; and to his demands for supplies of cattle for the purpose of draft and the consumption of the army about to disembark, he received a willing compliance. When, however, Sir Arthur offered to land at Oporto, and march with the patriots collected there at once upon the capital, his plan of operations was overruled, and a landing nearer Lisbon recommended by both the Junta and their generals. After communicating with the Admiral, a landing at Mondego Bay was decided upon. It was a fortunate circumstance that the mouth of the Mondego was open, for the Fort of Figueras had been taken by the partisan Zagalo, and was now occupied by a detachment of English marines. On the 1st of August the landing commenced, and on the 5th it was effected with but a few casualties, as the weather had continued favourable. The whole were disembarked on the fourth evening; and the gallant divisions formed their first bivouac upon the beach, and mustered about thirteen thousand effective men.

So far circumstances omened well for the success of the expedition; still the satisfaction of Sir Arthur must have been considerably abated by an announcement that Sir Hew Dalrymple was nominated to the chief command, and Sir Harry Burrard to the second. It was further intimated that the ill-planned expedition to the Baltic, under Sir John Moore, which had recently returned to England, had received orders of readiness for Portugal. Thus three officers might be immediately expected in the country, all of whom were of superior rank to himself. But as he was strongly enjoined to strike an immediate blow, if possible, and had the strongest discretionary powers as to the nature of the operations he should adopt, private feeling yielded at once to public principle, and the campaign in the Peninsula opened as it closed—in victory!

Immediately on landing a conference was held by Sir

Arthur Wellesley at Montemor Velho, with Bernardim Freire, who then commanded the Portuguese army, and plans for future operations were proposed and discussed. Freire was particularly anxious that the armies should unite, march into Beira, and there open the campaign; while the English General prudently refused to give up his communication with the coast, and trust to the uncertain chances of supplies which the country might afford. A movement on Leyria, which was represented as being largely stored with provisions, was next proposed and agreed to; and on the 9th the British advanced guard, composed of four companies of the 60th and 95th Rifles, supported by the brigades of Hill and Ferguson, quitted the Mondego, and early next day the main body followed.

It was soon ascertained by Sir Arthur Wellesley that no reliance could be placed on the promises of Freire, and that very slight advantages were likely to result from the insurrectionary movements in the provinces. The patriots were well disposed, but they had to be armed and organised to render them efficient, while the regular troops were required to be fed. Instead of finding supplies in Leyria for his own army, the Portuguese leader, having first seized on the magazines, demanded that Sir Arthur Wellesley should provide the native troops with supplies. Disgusted with this early display of bad faith in a partisan, from whom an ardent co-operation might have been expected, the English General peremptorily refused to accede to this unreasonable request.

If the English General found himself loaded with embarrassments, the French commandant, to use a figurative phrase, was not upon a bed of roses. The news that a British army had effected a landing in Mondego Bay reached Lisbon on the 2d. (The French had seized upon Lisbon in November of the previous year, the army under Junot numbering about 30,000 men.) Junot's position was fraught with danger. His

force, too small to coerce a rebellious people, was divided and at a distance. Setuval and the posts south of the Tagus were threatened by the insurgents, who were in force at Alcacer do Sal. The capital was prepared to revolt. Every means were used to excite "the hatred and the hopes of the multitude;" and while it was absolutely necessary that the forward movement of the invaders should be arrested, it appeared an act little short of madness to weaken the garrison of Lisbon when an insurrection might be momentarily expected.

Junot, however, determined to send Loison with a corps of about seven thousand five hundred men from Estremos, to strengthen Laborde, who had been detached on the 6th from Lisbon, with three thousand infantry, five hundred cavalry, and six pieces of cannon, to march by Villa Franca, Rio Mayor, and Candeiros to Leyria, and there unite with Loison's corps. Junot remained, to overawe the disaffected by his presence; and, as precautionary measures, the Spanish prisoners were strictly guarded, the powder removed from the magazines and placed on shipboard, and the citadel and forts of Lisbon strengthened and provided for a siege. Loison's corps reached Abrantes, and Laborde's Candeiros, on the 9th; and the latter moved next day to Alcobaca, and formed a junction with Thomieres and the garrison of Peniche, thus increasing his strength by one thousand men. On the same day Sir Arthur Wellesley's advanced guard entered Leyria, where his main body arrived on the 11th. Laborde, having a much stronger position in his rear, retired on the 14th to Rolica, leaving strong pickets to occupy Obidos and the windmill at Brilos, three miles in front.

Sir Arthur Wellesley's advance was happily timed; it prevented the intended junction of the French, and embarrassed Loison and Laborde, as each was ignorant of the exact position of the other. Loison, finding Leyria in possession of the British, fell back on Santarem, through Torres Novas;

while Laborde, alarmed lest his communications should be endangered, regarrisoned Peniche with a Swiss regiment, and sent a detachment to the right by Bombarral and Segura, to ascertain where Loison's corps were halted. "Sir Arthur Wellesley's first movement had thus cut the line of communication between Loison and Laborde, caused a loss of several forced marches to the former, and obliged the latter to risk an action with more than twice his own numbers."[1] While his lieutenants were thus engaged, Junot had come to a determination of taking the field in person, leaving the capital in charge of General Travot, with a garrison of seven thousand men. On the 15th, the same day on which Sir Arthur Wellesley's light troops entered Caldas, Junot moved from Lisbon with the whole of his reserve, consisting of two thousand infantry, six hundred cavalry, and ten guns, taking with him also his military chest and spare ammunition. Circumstances delayed his march; at Saccavem the ferry-boat had been removed by the peasantry, and he lost an entire day in throwing a bridge across the creek; and when on his route to Otta, a report that the English had landed in the neighbourhood of Lisbon induced him to retrace his steps to Villa Franca, which place he reached before he had discovered that the alarm was groundless. Leaving the reserve under the direction of Thiebault, Junot proceeded direct to Alcoentre, and there assumed the command of Loison's corps.

Sir Arthur Wellesley in the meantime had pushed forward to attack Laborde. "Animated by the danger, encouraged by the local advantages of his position, and justly confident in his own talents, Laborde resolved to abide his enemy's assault;"[2] and this bold determination was admirably followed up by the ability of his dispositions and the obstinacy of his resistance. All the arrangements for the attack having been completed on the evening of the 16th, at dawn

[1] Napier. [2] Ibid.

the British got under arms. Never was a sweeter spot chosen for the scene of a murderous combat than that which the village of Rolica and its surrounding landscape presented at sunrise. The place, with its adjacent hamlets, contained, as it was computed, a population of nearly three hundred families. The houses were neat and commodious, each surrounded by an enclosed garden, stocked with vines; while the country about the villages, studded thickly with olive grounds, ilex groves, and cork woods, exhibited all that rustic comfort which marks a contented and industrious peasantry. Upon a table-land immediately in front of Rolica, and overlooking the country for many miles, the French were strongly posted. Laborde had seized every advantage a position of immense strength naturally presented, while the sierra afforded a succession of posts on which he might easily fall back.

The following graphic sketch happily describes the opening movements of the 17th:—

"As the distance between Caldas and Rolica falls not short of three leagues, the morning was considerably advanced before the troops arrived within musket shot of the French outposts. Nothing could exceed the orderly and gallant style in which they traversed the intervening space. The day chanced to be remarkably fine, and the scenery through which the columns passed was varied and striking; but they were by far the most striking features in the whole panorama. Whenever any broken piece of ground or other obstacle came in the way, the head of the column having passed it, would pause till the rear had recovered its order and resumed its station; and then the whole would press forward, with the same attention to distances and the same orderly silence which are usually preserved at a review. At last, however, the enemy's line became visible, and in a few minutes afterwards the skirmishers were engaged. The centre division now broke into columns

of battalions; that on the left pressed on with a quick pace, whilst the riflemen on the right drove in, with great gallantry and in rapid style, the tirailleurs opposed to them."[1]

Laborde's first position soon became untenable; his rear was endangered; and without a moment's indecision, he fell farther back, and occupied the mountain passes. Nothing could be stronger than his second position. "The way by which the assailants had to ascend was up ravines rather than paths, more practicable for goats than men; so steep that in many parts a slip of the foot would have been fatal; in some parts overgrown with briars, and in others impeded by fragments of rock."[2] Of these the centre was the most practicable; and the 29th and 9th regiments advanced to storm it, under the fire of the British guns; while a cloud of skirmishers vanished among rocks and copse-wood, connecting the advance of the different columns, and feeling or forcing their way through obstacles that a vigorous defence had rendered almost insurmountable. Gradually the scene became more animated, as on each of the several points of attack the assailants and the assailed became warmly engaged. The spattering fusilade of the light troops was lost in the rolling volleys of the columns, which, with the deeper boom of cannon, echoed loudly through the mountains. The hollow water-courses, by which the British had attacked, hid for a time the combatants from view, but the smoke wreathing over the ravines showed by its density the place where the work of death went fastest on. On the left Laborde gradually lost ground; but on the right his exertions were redoubled, in the desperate hope that Loison might yet come up and thus retrieve the fortune of the day. Here, of course, the struggle became bloodiest. While the flank movements of Trant and Ferguson had not yet proved themselves successful, the 9th and 29th regiments forced

[1] Lord Londonderry's Narrative. [2] Southey.

their respective passes, and gained the plateau of the hill. They reached the summit out of breath, their ranks disordered, and their formation requiring a few minutes to correct. At that moment a fine battalion of Laborde's came boldly forward, delivered a shattering volley, and broke through the centre of the British regiment. But the 29th were broken, not beaten, and the 9th came to their assistance. The officers discharged their duties nobly, and the men fought and formed and held their ground with desperate obstinacy, until Ferguson won the right flank of the position; when, aware that the chance of support was hopeless, Laborde retreated in excellent order, covering the regressive movement of his battalions by repeated charges of his cavalry.

His last stand was made on the ridge of Zambugeira in his rear. The British, now come up in force, rendered opposition unavailing, and falling back on the Quinta de Bugagliera, he united his beaten corps with the troops he had detached to look after Loison at Segura; thence, abandoning his guns, he marched by the pass of Runa, and gained Montachique by a severe night march, leaving the line of Torres Vedras uncovered, and consequently Lisbon open to the advance of the British army.

The casualties on both sides, considering the small number actually engaged, marks Rolica as one of the most sanguinary conflicts which has occurred in modern warfare. The actual combatants did not exceed five thousand men; and the French loss, on a low estimate, amounted to seven hundred, and the British to nearly five hundred, in killed, wounded, and missing. Laborde was wounded early in the action, but refused to leave the field; and the British loss included two lieutenant-colonels.

There is no reminiscence of the Peninsula which the soldier recalls with more pride than the small but brilliant action of Rolica. It is true that the scale was limited, and

that the mighty masses with which after battle-fields were crowded were wanting for effect; but nothing could be more perfect than Wellesley's attack—nothing more scientific than Laborde's resistance. Other circumstances add to the interest of this gallant affair. It was the first trial of the hero of Assye opposed to European troops; and these also troops that, with no absurd pretension, had claimed the title of invincible. The moral effect of such a victory was of immense importance. It was the dawning of a glorious day; and its results were admirably calculated to confirm the wavering faith of doubtful allies, and remove the conviction of the French regarding their military superiority. It was a noble compliment paid by Napoleon to British infantry, when he observed, "that they never knew when they were beaten;" and it was the happiest delusion under which a soldier ever laboured, in fancying himself unconquerable. That belief had been artfully cherished by Napoleon; and to its prevalence among his soldiers half his victories may be ascribed. But the trial at Rolica at once dispelled the dream; and the French discovered in the island soldiers to whom they were opposed, men in everything their equals, and in unflinching gallantry infinitely their superiors. As Rolica betrayed the fine properties of British soldiers to their enemies, so it was not its least advantage that it also confirmed the confidence of their leader in the troops on whom he depended for success.

Having continued the pursuit as far as Villa Verde on the road to Torres Vedras, Sir Arthur Wellesley halted, with the full intention of pressing the French retreat early next morning. The brilliant success of their first encounter with the enemy had roused the ardour of the British soldiery to a pitch of enthusiasm which bade fair to overcome every obstacle that might present itself; and not a doubt existed that a rapid march would bring Sir Arthur to

the capital, or, should Junot risk a battle, that a second victory would place Lisbon in the possession of the conquerors. But overnight a messenger arrived, and caused the orders issued for advancing to be recalled. Intelligence was brought to the English commander that General Anstruther, with a brigade from England, and a fleet of store-ships, had anchored off Peniche; and to secure the safe landing of the troops and stores, Sir Arthur moved on Lourinha, and next day continuing his march towards the coast, on the evening of the 19th took up a position beside the village of Vimiera, having detached a brigade to cover the march of General Anstruther's reinforcement, which, after immense difficulty, had been landed in the Bay of Maceira, and that too in the face of a very superior cavalry, which overspread the country around the position, and increased the dangers of disembarking. Another brigade, under General Acland, arrived on the 20th, and landed that night, increasing Sir Arthur Wellesley's force to sixteen thousand men and eighteen pieces of artillery. Thus reinforced the British General determined on active operations; and orders were issued for an immediate advance towards Lisbon.

Very unfortunately, at this critical juncture the arrival of Sir Harry Burrard was announced; and Sir Arthur Wellesley went on board the frigate in Maceira Roads to communicate with his senior officer. He detailed the past, explained his future views, and urged the immediate continuance of offensive operations. Nothing could be simpler, nothing more soldierly, than the plans he recommended. He proposed on the next morning to march to Mafra, and turn the French position at Torres Vedras. But unhappily for England, a man had been sent out to mar the masterly dispositions of his predecessor. A true disciple of the Fabian school, delay seemed the leading object to be gained. Moore, he argued, might be expected

in a few days upon the coast; but he forgot that these few days would have brought Wellesley to Lisbon. He urged that the cavalry were weak, the artillery badly horsed, and the risk that should be incurred of losing supplies by moving from the coast. It was in vain that Sir Arthur pointed out, in reply to all these objections, the impossibility of remaining quiet, because if they did not advance to attack the enemy, the enemy would assuredly advance and attack them. It was in vain that he represented the great advantage which must arise from Sir John Moore landing in the Mondego and cutting off Junot's retreat. Sir Harry was not to be convinced. He remained obdurate to every argument employed to induce him to adopt the offensive; and Wellesley returned to his camp, convinced "that the military incapacity of his superior officer would, when it paralysed early success, as it did that of Rolica, entail upon the expedition ulterior disaster and disgrace." It was otherwise decreed, and the decision of an enemy wreathed the laurel on Wellesley's brow of which the timidity of a feeble-minded colleague would have robbed him.

While the clear and vigorous appeal of Sir Arthur had failed in rousing into action one in whose mind "an inauspicious spirit of caution prevailed," Junot, to whom delay would have been as fatal as defeat, was preparing to strike the blow that Wellesley was so anxious to have anticipated. The French commander dare not remain inactive. He had scarcely provisions for a second day, and it was dreaded that every courier who arrived from the capital would bring the unwelcome news that Lisbon was in arms. To fight, and not to manœuvre, was the only game for one to whom less evil would result from an immediate repulse than good could be gained by a tardy victory. Accordingly on the same evening on which Sir Harry Burrard had countermanded the advance of the British, Junot quitted

his position, and after a tedious night-march over broken roads and mountain passes, by seven o'clock on the morning of the 21st halted within four miles of the English pickets. Here Junot formed his columns for attack; and as the ground concealed his movements, his advanced cavalry had topped the high grounds before the British were apprised that they were on the eve of an engagement. Before daybreak, according to the custom of the English army, the troops were under arms, and consequently ready "for the fray." The French advanced pickets were promptly supported by their infantry brigades, column after column followed in order of battle, and with delight Wellesley observed that the combat he had courted was unavoidable.

The relative force of the rival armies was pretty equal. The French consisted of three divisions of infantry, one of cavalry, and twenty-three guns of light calibre. Wellesley was stronger in infantry, equal in artillery, but in cavalry greatly inferior to his opponent. The preparatory dispositions were rapidly effected by the French General. A little before ten o'clock he commenced his attack, and the contest at Vimiera opened.

The French attacks were separately made, but they were nearly simultaneous. Laborde, who commanded the left wing, consisting of five thousand men, moved along the valley to carry the eminence on which the advanced brigade of Wellesley's army was in position. The village and churchyard were strongly occupied by British light troops, and part of the 43d, while seven pieces of artillery opened with shrapnell shells upon the column as it came on with all the imposing steadiness for which French troops are so distinguished. The fire of the British skirmishers, who were extended along the front of the plateau, wherever trees or banks would cover them, was also particularly destructive. Unshaken by the cannonade, the enemy pressed forward,

and, mounting the hill, boldly confronted the British 50th, who, with a company of the 95th, were formed on the crest. That gallant regiment waited until their opponents had nearly crowned the height, when, after delivering a shattering volley at thirty paces distance, they rushed forward with the bayonet, and broke through the angle of the column. The French at first offered a stout resistance, but they were driven from the field with great slaughter. A separate attack made on the village by a French corps who had advanced on the right of the large column, was defeated by Acland's brigade; while a squadron of the 20th Light Dragoons charged Laborde's disordered ranks, and the rout of the enemy was completed. Nearly one thousand of the enemy were left upon the field, and seven guns and three hundred prisoners were taken.

The pursuit of the routed enemy was continued for a considerable distance, until their reserved cavalry, under Margaron, checked the small but gallant band of British dragoons, who, now obliged to yield to numbers, were driven back with heavy loss, in which, unfortunately, their brave leader, Lieut.-Colonel Taylor, was included. A small column under Brennier, which had supported Laborde's attack by a flank movement on his left, had no better fortune. Anstruther's brigade charged it furiously with the bayonet, and the French were repulsed with considerable loss.

Kellerman, with the French grenadiers, who formed the reserve, made a desperate effort to recover the day. Advancing to the height, he drove in the advanced companies of the 43d; but that regiment rallied instantly, and while the head of the enemy's column was shaken by the fire of the English artillery, the 43d came gallantly forward, and after a short but sanguinary contest, drove the French grenadiers from the ridge at the bayonet's point.

The left of the British position was also furiously assailed

by Solignac's division, which had advanced along the mountain ridge. They found the British 36th, 40th, and 71st formed in three lines and ready to receive them; but they deployed with uncommon quickness, and on both sides several murderous volleys were interchanged. The 82d and 29th came also into action; and a sweeping fire from the English guns was vigorously maintained. Nothing could shake the steadiness of the British infantry; and alarmed by a threatening movement of the fifth brigade, and Portuguese, who were seen marching rapidly towards Lourinha, the French fell back. But in turn they were fiercely assailed; and as the mountain brow opened out, the regiments of Ferguson's second line came up at double quick, formed line, and took part in the combat. The word to charge was given. "One cheer, loud, regular, and appalling, warned the French of what they had to expect; but the French were men of tried valour, and they stood to the last. The onset that ensued was tremendous: the entire front rank of the enemy perished; and the men who composed it were found, at the close of the action, lying on the very spots where each, during its continuance, had stood."[1] Broken completely, the French rapidly retreated, leaving the ground to the conquerors, with six pieces of artillery. General Solignac was severely wounded, and carried off the field; and outflanked and driven into the low grounds about Perinza, the capture of the greater portion of the retiring column seemed now a certainty.

About this period of the battle, Brennier, who had got his brigade entangled in a ravine that protected the British left, and consequently had failed in supporting Laborde's attack on Anstruther, managed to extricate himself from the difficulty into which, from ignorance of the ground, he had involved himself; and in retreating, suddenly came upon the 71st and 82d regiments, who were in charge of the

[1] Lord Londonderry's Narrative.

captured guns, and resting after their late exertions, to be enabled to come forward when required. Taken by surprise, the two regiments retired to re-form, and Brennier recovered the cannon. Instantly, however, on gaining the high ground, they rallied and advanced again; threw in a well-directed volley, lowered their bayonets, and with a loud huzza, came forward to the charge.[1] But the French wanted nerve to stand it; they broke, the guns were once more seized, and, with the loss of their General, who was wounded and made prisoner, the French retreated in great disorder.

Such was the state of the field—Solignac and Brennier's brigades separated and disorganised, while, flushed with conquest, Ferguson's success must have proved decisive—when the paralysing order to "halt," issued by a British General, effected for the beaten enemy a miraculous deliverance from what themselves considered inevitable destruction. The opportunity was promptly seized. Covered by a fine cavalry, the relics of the French infantry rallied and re-formed with a rapidity that did infinite credit to their discipline; and then commencing a soldierly retreat, they united themselves with the shattered masses who were retiring in great disorder after their failure upon the British centre.

Sir Harry Burrard, who had been fortunately absent while the dispositions for the action were made, and arriving on the ground during the heat of battle, had not ventured to interfere previously, now assumed the chief command. A decisive victory was won. Every effort of Junot's had been exhausted; every arm of his troops had been bravely but uselessly employed; and Brennier's anxious inquiry,

[1] The piper of the grenadier company of the 71st, when knocked down by a musket shot in the thigh, refused to quit the field, and sitting on a knapsack struck up a pibroch, observing, "De'il hae his soul gin the lads wanted music." The Highland Society presented Stewart with a beautiful stand of pipes, bearing a complimentary inscription.

when brought into the presence of Sir Arthur Wellesley, "Whether Kellerman had charged?" showed that the whole of his reserve had been brought into action, and, of course, that no resources were at hand. It was not yet noon: the French were in full retreat; half their artillery taken, and nothing but their cavalry effective. With the British army matters stood differently: the Portuguese had not been called upon; the first and fifth brigades had never been engaged, and the former were actually two miles nearer Torres Vedras than the French. The fourth and eighth brigades had suffered very few casualties, were quite fresh, and ready for any exertion that might have been required from them. In the morning, numbers were in favour of the British; at noon, how much more was this advantage improved! Nothing was wanted but to follow up the victory, and by forcing Junot on the Tagus, push forward direct to Montachique by Torres Vedras, and thus cut off the French retreat upon the capital. By advancing, Wellesley must have obliged Junot to abandon the few guns he had carried off, and leave his wounded and stragglers to their fate, while he sought refuge in Elvas or Almeida. Of course Sir Arthur Wellesley saw the glorious result his success was sure to realise, and Lisbon appeared already in possession. What must have been his mortification when Sir Harry Burrard issued the fatal order; and, deaf to every remonstrance, "urged upon the field with the warmth and earnestness of a successful officer," the advice of Wellesley was disregarded, and the British army, to their great astonishment, were directed to halt and pile arms!

While his imbecile superior had thus arrested Wellesley's career of glory for a season, Junot, after withdrawing his beaten corps, and sustaining well the high character he had acquired for personal intrepidity by the recklessness with which he exposed himself to danger, when affairs became disastrous called a council of war to consider the

course that, under existing circumstances, he should now pursue. Apprised that Lisbon was not secure from insurrection for an hour, short of ammunition, and damped by a signal defeat, the situation of the French army was perilous in the extreme. To force their way over the frontier and join the next corps in Spain, was almost a desperate alternative; and the decision of Junot's generals was unanimous, that negotiation should be resorted to. Kellerman was accordingly despatched to the British camp, and, as the event proved, an abler functionary could not have been selected.

No enemy in defeat could sustain the high reputation that years of conquest had bestowed upon them better than Junot's troops at Vimiero. A braver field was never won; and throughout the day the French behaved like men whose battles had ever terminated in victories. All fought most gallantly; and the grenadiers, who formed the reserve, elicited the admiration of their opponents by the determination with which they pushed through a cross fire of grape and musketry when advancing to the heights from which the bayonets of the British only could drive them back. No wonder that the slaughter was commensurate with the obstinacy of the combat; and when the numbers are considered, the casualties will appear immense. The enemy brought some twelve or thirteen thousand men into action; and by a moderate estimate they lost almost a fourth. The British casualties were much lighter, amounting in the whole to not eight hundred *hors de combat*. To ascertain Junot's actual loss is difficult. The French returns are always notoriously erroneous, and when it is remembered that their attacks were made in close column, and that their advance was always exposed to a sweeping fire of the British guns, and reserved volleys of musketry from the infantry, it may be easily imagined that the slaughter must have been consequently great.

In the interim Sir Hew Dalrymple had arrived and taken the direction of affairs; and thus in the brief space of four-and-twenty hours the command of the British army had thrice changed hands.

Immediately on assuming the command, ascertaining the state of the British army, and obtaining from Sir Arthur Wellesley a brief but clear explanation of recent operations, Sir Hew determined to advance, and orders to that effect were issued. But the moment for successful action had passed away, and in military affairs a lost opportunity can rarely be recalled. What results might have arisen from the dispositions of Sir Hew were fated to remain matters of conjecture; for Kellerman, with a suitable escort of cavalry, arrived at the British outposts, and was immediately conducted to the quarters of the British General. An armistice for forty-eight hours was concluded; and a negotiation, than which none was afterwards more extensively canvassed nor more differently estimated, commenced, which ended in what was termed the Convention of Cintra. This Convention was signed at Lisbon on August 30. Its chief provision was that the French should be allowed to evacuate Portugal.

Sir Arthur did not conceal his opinions from the Government at home, either with respect to the Convention before it was signed or the general prospects of the British interests in Portugal. In a letter to Lord Castlereagh, dated the 30th of August, he observes:—

"Ten days after the action of the 21st we are not farther advanced, nor indeed, I believe, so far advanced as we should and ought to have been on the night of the 21st.

"I assure you, my dear lord, matters are not prospering here; and I feel an earnest desire to quit the army. I have been too successful with this army ever to serve with it in a subordinate situation, with satisfaction to the person who shall command it, and of course not to myself. However, I shall do what the Government may wish."

If Sir Arthur Wellesley felt dissatisfied with the measures adopted by those who had superseded him in the command, the disgust generally produced throughout the army by the infelicitous appointments of the Government, was "deep, not loud." From the moment the fatal order of the 21st was issued, the troops reposed no confidence in their new leaders; and even to the youngest soldier the incompetency of Sir Harry and Sir Hew was perfectly apparent. All regretted that operations commenced under such glorious promise should be stripped of their results, and terminate in diplomacy and inaction; while, aware of the loss the army and the country had sustained when their late commander's talents had been placed in abeyance for a season, the general officers took an early opportunity of marking the high estimation in which Sir Arthur Wellesley was held; and on the 3d of September a piece of plate, of the value of 1000 guineas, was presented to him. It bore the following inscription:—

"From the general officers serving in the British army, originally landed in Figueira, in Portugal, in the year 1808, to Lieut.-General the Right Hon. Sir Arthur Wellesley, K.B., &c. &c., their Commander.

"Major-General Spencer, second in command, Major-Generals Hill and Ferguson, Brig.-Generals Nightingale, Bowes, Fane, and Crauford, offer this gift to their leader, in testimony of the high respect and esteem they feel for him as a man, and the unbounded confidence they place in him as an officer."

On the 11th of September the first division of the French army embarked under the protection of the second and third, and next day they were in turn put on shipboard, and preserved as much as possible from insult or injury by a brigade of British troops. The citadel was instantly occupied by an English garrison, and Portugal declared to be "now unpolluted by a Frenchman's foot." Nothing

could exceed the joy that the Portuguese exhibited at their deliverance; for nine nights and days the city was illuminated, the bells rang merrily, and all ranks appeared to have but one common feeling—the liveliest exultation at the departure of their oppressors.

Finding that his relations with the Commander-in-Chief were gradually becoming less cordial, and, of course, neither satisfactory to himself nor of utility to the public, Sir Arthur Wellesley determined on returning to England, and addressed the annexed letter to Sir Hew Dalrymple :—

"LUMIAR, 17*th Sept.* 1808.

"SIR,—The embarkation of the French troops having brought to a final close the operations of the army in Portugal, and as in the present state of the season some time must elapse before the troops can enter upon any other active operation, and as I understand you have sent Lord William Bentinck on the service for which you had thought me qualified, and it is not probable that there will be an opportunity for active service, or that you will require my assistance at this particular moment, or for some time to come, I am induced to request your permission to go to England.

"The situation of my office of Chief Secretary in Ireland, of which the duties have been done lately by a gentleman who is now dead, renders it desirable, under these circumstances, that I should be in England as soon as possible, to ascertain whether it is his Majesty's pleasure that I should continue to hold it, or that I should relinquish it. I have therefore to request that you will give me leave to go to England by the first ship that shall sail.—I have the honour to be, &c., ARTHUR WELLESLEY."

And yet the application appears to have been reluctantly made; Sir Arthur Wellesley felt all that conscious superiority

which a master-mind exercises over those of inferior character; and had Sir Hew Dalrymple possessed sufficient tact to have availed himself of those talents, which in so brief a period were afterwards so fully developed, how differently might that campaign have closed, and a name remembered only as being affixed to the Convention, might have been emblazoned in British history as the conqueror of Junot!

Sir Arthur Wellesley resumed his duties as Chief Secretary for Ireland immediately on his landing from Portugal. In January 1809, he took his seat in Parliament, and in his place there had the gratification to receive the thanks of the Commons of Great Britain for his gallantry and skill at the battle of Vimiero.

A similar mark of their approbation was conveyed to Sir Arthur Wellesley, the generals who served under him, and the whole of the officers and men, by a resolution of the House of Lords, conveyed through the Lord Chancellor. A suitable reply from Sir Arthur was returned for this mark of high distinction conferred upon the army by the Upper House; and with these occurrences the history of the first Peninsular campaign may have been said to terminate.

CHAPTER V.

WHILE Sir Arthur Wellesley returned on leave of absence, Sir Hew Dalrymple was recalled under circumstances which sufficiently implied "that the country was not satisfied with the result of the two late victories." Sir Harry Burrard, who succeeded him, under the plea of bad health, resigned after a few days, "and the command then devolved upon one whom, next to Sir Arthur Wellesley, the troops most respected and loved—Lieutenant-General Sir John Moore."

That General, having advanced into the heart of Spain with a view to co-operate with the Spaniards in driving the French across the Pyrenees, discovered, when it was too late, that there was no Spanish army on which he could rely for support. Napoleon, and afterwards Soult, was soon upon his track with a force far superior to his own. Moore deeming it prudent to retreat, began to fall back upon Coruña, where he hoped to find ships on which to embark his troops. The retreat and the victory at Coruña, 16th January 1809, which cost the life of the gallant Moore, are among the most famous exploits of the Peninsular War; but a narrative of these events does not properly belong to this work.

The political aspect of Spain, from the time Napoleon

crossed the Pyrenees to the embarkation of the English army at Coruña, had been daily becoming more inauspicious; and affairs in Portugal were scarcely more promising in their appearance. The British Government, however, determined on making another great effort to relieve the Peninsula. Sir John Cradock had been sent from England to take command of such British troops as remained in Portugal after Moore had passed the frontier; but the chief command was now given with increased powers to Sir Arthur Wellesley. Having resigned his secretaryship in Ireland, and vacated his seat in Parliament, Sir Arthur embarked on board the "Surveillante" with his staff, left Portsmouth on the 16th of April, and after a dangerous but quick passage, anchored in the Tagus on the 22d.

Having ascertained that the armies of Soult and Victor —the one at Oporto, and the other on the Guadiana—were too widely separated to permit of any unity of operations between these marshals, Sir Arthur Wellesley decided on attacking the Duke of Dalmatia without delay, and, if successful in the north, to return rapidly to the Tagus, and in conjunction with the corps of Cuesta, the Spanish general, fall subsequently upon Victor. Sir Arthur transferred his headquarters on the 1st of May to Pombal, and on the 2d to Coimbra, where the concentration of the army was effected on the 5th. At both these places the British General was enthusiastically welcomed. The streets were brilliantly illuminated, bonfires blazed on the heights, and the deafening *vivas* of the populace told how much in unison with the feelings of the nation had been the appointment of the new commander.

Independently of a separate corps under the orders of Marshal Beresford, the army, as now organised, comprised four divisions, of which one was cavalry, under Lieutenant-General Payne. The first division had two brigades of infantry and twelve pieces of cannon. The second, three

brigades of infantry and six guns. The third, two brigades of infantry and six pieces of artillery. Lieutenant-General Paget commanded the first corps, Sherbrooke the second, and Hill the third. The strength of the whole of these *corps d'armée* was fourteen thousand six hundred infantry, about fifteen hundred cavalry, and twenty-four pieces of cannon.

The general plan of operations upon which Sir Arthur Wellesley had decided turned upon the isolated situation in which his opponent was placed. By able combinations he hoped to cut him off from Spain, and thus oblige him to fight at great disadvantage, or save his army by a surrender. While the French brigades were unavoidably extended between the Vouga and Tamaga, and the wings severed by the Douro, the British army was in hand at Coimbra, and ready to operate by Viseu and Lamego against either the left of the enemy, which in four or five marches might be turned, or against the right, which in two marches could be assailed with overwhelming numbers. Wellesley determined to avail himself of both routes, preferring for his principal attack the right of the French army, as its position was exposed, and it was more immediately within his reach. Accordingly Beresford marched on the 6th upon Lamego by Viseu. On the 7th, Paget's division, with the light cavalry, took the Oporto road, halting, however, on the 8th to allow the Marshal to gain the upper Douro. On the 9th the march was continued for the Vouga, whither also Hill's division was moving by the Aveiro road; and there the troops, having arrived after nightfall, halted.

The French brigades were anxiously urged forward; no rest could be allowed; the Douro was passed, and its floating bridge destroyed before sunrise. In effecting this, fortune favoured the retreating enemy. Hill's corps, which had been ordered to march by the coast road, had been misdirected, taking a wrong route, and lost too much time

to reach the point where, had it been able to arrive, the French retreat might have been interrupted and the bridge preserved.

Early on the morning of the 12th, the English advanced guard reached Villa Nova, and at eight o'clock the columns had come up, and the whole were concentrated and ready for action. But no general, and he victorious, was more painfully situated than Sir Arthur Wellesley. A river—deep, rapid, and three hundred yards across—rolled its dark waters in his front: a bold and vigorous enemy lay beyond it; no means of transport were provided; and on the instant passage of that formidable stream more than success depended; for not only the enemy might elude his attack, but an isolated corps was endangered,—"Soult might retire unmolested into Galicia if he pleased, or, by attacking Beresford singly, overpower him by superior force, and enter Beira. Danger often stimulates bravery to startling but successful enterprises; and in this emergency, Wellesley decided on as bold an effort as modern warfare parallels,—the crossing of the Douro."

From the heights which concealed his own troops Sir Arthur Wellesley commanded an uninterrupted view of the country for miles around, and the Vallonga road at once fixed his attention. Dust rose in thick clouds,—baggage could be seen occasionally,—and the march of Soult's columns was readily detected. Directly opposite the heights of Serra, a building of great extent, encircled by a wall which surrounded a considerable area, was discovered. "The Seminary" was particularly strong. It had but one entrance, and that communicated with the Vallonga road, and was secured by an iron gate. Could this edifice be occupied, Wellesley might open a passage for his army; but where were means to be obtained by which troops could be thrown across the stream, and the seizure of that building effected? A barrier, to all appearance impassable, was unfortunately

interposed. Where no hope presents itself, the most ardent spirit will yield. Before Wellesley rolled the Douro,—and "Alexander the Great might have turned from it without shame!"

By what trifling agencies have not the boldest projects been successfully carried out! But in the annals of modern warfare, never was a splendid enterprise achieved whose opening means were so superlatively contemptible. Colonel Waters, a Portuguese partisan, had communicated to Sir Arthur the information that the bridge had been destroyed, and he had been despatched on what appeared the hopeless errand of finding some mode of transport. Fortune unexpectedly befriended him: a barber of Oporto had eluded the vigilance of Soult's patrols, and paddled his skiff across the river. Him the Colonel found in company with the Prior of Amarante; and the latter having volunteered his services, the barber consented to assist; and with these unmilitary associates, Waters crossed the stream, and in half an hour returned, unperceived, with several large barges.

Seizing the boon which fortune offered, Sir Arthur instantly got twenty pieces of cannon placed in battery in the convent gardens, and despatched General John Murray, with the Germans, part of the 14th Light Dragoons, and two guns, to cross the river at Avintas, and descend by the opposite bank. Not a movement in the city showed that the enemy apprehended an attack—not a patrol had shown itself—and an ominous tranquillity bespoke a fatal confidence. A barge was reported ready to attempt a passage. "Let the men cross!" was the laconic order; and that order was promptly obeyed. An officer and twenty-five of the 3d regiment (Buffs) jumped on board; and in twelve minutes they had landed unseen and unopposed.

A second boat effected its passage with similar celerity and equal fortune; but the third, in which General Paget had embarked, was discovered by the enemy, and a scene,

which may be fancied but not described, ensued. The rattle of the French drums as they beat to arms was nearly drowned in the outcries of the citizens, who witnessed the daring effort, which they encouraged by their cheers, but which, unhappily, they wanted means to second. Disregarding order, in their anxiety to reach the threatened point, the French troops poured out of the city, their skirmishers hurrying on in double quick to arrest, if possible, the farther transit of the boats, and crush those already landed before they could be supported from the other shore. The British artillery thundered from the convent garden; and the divisions of Paget, Hill, and Sherbrooke, crowded the banks, gazing on a contest in which, for the present, they could take no share.

The Seminary was furiously assailed—General Paget was severely wounded—and the command devolved on General Hill. On each side the numbers of the combatants increased; but on the French side in fourfold number. To one side of the building, however, the French attack was restricted; for the guns from the Serra swept the other approaches, and maintained a fire under which, from its precision and rapidity, the French refused to come forward. Presently the lower portion of the city was abandoned, and the inhabitants pushed boats over the river, and, in large parties, brought the Guards across. Three battalions were already established in the Seminary. The detached corps, under Murray, was descried moving rapidly down the right bank of the Douro; and the assailants abandoned the attack, and commenced a disorderly retreat.

"Horse, foot, and cannon now rushed tumultuously towards the rear; the city was hastily evacuated, amidst the enthusiastic cheers of the people: Hill's central column, now strongly reinforced by the passage of the 48th and 66th regiments, debouched fiercely from the Seminary, and by repeated volleys on the flank of the flying columns, threw

them into utter confusion; and nothing but the inactivity of Murray on the right, who did not make the use he might of his advantageous position on the flank of the retreating host, preserved them from total ruin. As it was, they lost five hundred killed and wounded, five guns, and a large quantity of ammunition, in the action: seven hundred sick were taken in the hospital, and fifty French guns in the arsenal; and so complete and unexpected was the surprise that Wellington, at four o'clock, quietly sat down to the dinner and table service which had been prepared for Marshal Soult."[1]

The astonishment of the French Marshal and his officers at the sudden and complete success which crowned the opening of Wellesley's operations was indescribable. One distinguishing quality which marks a veteran army is the rapidity with which it remedies disaster or surprise, re-organises its broken battalions, and, with lessened numbers, becomes, in everything besides, as formidable as it was before. Such was the case with Soult's beaten divisions: they rallied and re-formed as they fell back by the Vallonga road; and, covered by a powerful rear-guard, leisurely retreated by Guimaraens, to unite with Loison at Amarante.

But astounding intelligence reached the French Marshal on the morning of the 13th. On the preceding day, Beresford, having crossed the river higher up, had fallen upon the French outposts, and obliged Loison to abandon the bridge of Amarante; and, with his corps, the latter was reported to be in full march in the direction of Oporto. These were indeed disastrous tidings. Virtually his retreat was cut off, and Soult's position was imminently dangerous. To recover the bridge, which Loison had unwarrantably given up, was not to be attempted, garrisoned as it was by a mixed corps of regular troops, British and Portuguese. The great road of Braga was now in possession of the enemy;

[1] Alison's *History of Europe.*

and by his own genius and resources, the French Marshal must extricate or lose an army!

"Not a moment was to be lost: already the British outposts began to appear, and the thunder of their horse-artillery was heard at no great distance. The energy of the French General, however, now fully aroused, was equal to the crisis. He instantly resolved to abandon his artillery, ammunition, and baggage, and make his way, with all imaginable expedition, across the mountains to the Braga road. This resolution was immediately adopted; all the powder which the men could not carry was blown up near Penafiel on the morning of the 13th; and the French army, abandoning its whole carriages, rapidly ascended the valley of the Sousa by roads almost impracticable even for the cavalry, rejoined Loison at Guimaraens, and continuing its passage over the mountains, and leaving Braga on its left, at length regained the great road at San-Joad del Rey, a short way beyond that town."[1]

Nothing could be more disheartening than the situation of the French army. The rain came down in torrents,—the roads were scarcely passable,—the soldiers were mostly without shoes,—and, from fatigue and weakness, numbers dropped from the ranks, and from necessity were abandoned. The routes by Braga and Amarante were occupied by the British. The mountain streams were filled with water, the fords generally impassable, and but one line of retreat remained, and that required that the mountain torrent of the Cavado should be crossed by the bridge at Ponte Nova. "This bridge was occupied, and had been partially destroyed by the peasants: unless it could be regained, the hour of surrender had arrived; for the army was struggling through a narrow defile between awful precipices almost in single file; and Wellington, in close pursuit, thundered in the rear, and would infallibly attack next morning."[2]

[1] Alison's *History of Europe.* [2] Ibid.

By generals of the common stamp, Soult's prospects would have been considered hopeless and irremediable; but, with that energetic resolution for which the French Marshal's character was remarkable, though astounded, he did not despond. Selecting the most daring among his officers, he gave him one hundred chosen grenadiers, a troop of cavalry, and an order to force the bridge.

Major Dulong proved that Soult had not been deceived in the person to whom this desperate duty had been confided. He reached the bridge in silence; a storm was raging furiously; and, amid the howling gusts of wind, the approaching footsteps of the French grenadiers were unheard by the advanced sentinel, and the soldier was bayoneted at his post. A strip of masonry, barely sufficient for a man to cross by, was all that remained of the bridge; and the waters of the Cavedo, swollen by an angry flood which came down in torrents from the mountains, were roaring awfully beneath it. Unappalled, Dulong crept over this perilous arch. A soldier followed, but not with equal fortune; he lost his footing, and perished. Other brave men were not wanting—eleven crept across—fell unexpectedly upon the Portuguese guard, and, favoured by night and the false security of its defenders, carried a post which a dozen resolute men could have made good against a thousand.

The repairs of the bridge were quickly effected; but the British artillery were already up, and as the French filed over they suffered an enormous loss. A second and more formidable obstacle barred the route. The mountain path, scarped from the hill-side, terminated in a narrow arch flung across a torrent, called "the Saltador." It was held by some Portuguese partisans; and two attempts made by Soult to carry it had failed. A third, however, proved successful, and the French effected their retreat.

The official statement, forwarded to Lord Castlereagh by Sir Arthur Wellesley, gives a compressed but lucid state-

ment of the results of the allied operations. The despatch, from which the following extract is taken, was dated Montalegre, May 18, 1809:—

"I have found that Soult had taken a road through the mountains towards Orense, by which it would be difficult, if not impossible, for me to overtake him, and on which I had no means of stopping him.

"The enemy commenced this retreat, as I have informed your lordship, by destroying a great proportion of his guns and ammunition. He afterwards destroyed the remainder of both and a great proportion of his baggage, and kept nothing excepting what the soldiers or a few mules could carry. He has left behind him his sick and wounded; and the road from Penafield to Montalegre is strewed with the carcasses of horses and mules, and of French soldiers who were put to death by the peasantry before our advanced guard could save them.

"This last circumstance is the natural effect of the species of warfare which the enemy have carried on in this country.

"Their soldiers have plundered and murdered the peasantry at their pleasure; and I have seen many persons hanging on the trees by the sides of the road, executed for no reason that I could learn, excepting that they have not been friendly to the French invasion and usurpation of the government of their country; and the route of their column on their retreat could be traced by the smoke of the villages to which they set fire.

"We have taken about five hundred prisoners. Upon the whole, the enemy has not lost less than a fourth of his army, and all his artillery and equipments, since we attacked him on the Vouga.

"I hope your lordship will believe that no measure which I could take was omitted to intercept the enemy's retreat. It is obvious, however, that if any army throws away all its cannon, equipments, and baggage, and everything which can

strengthen it and can enable it to act together as a body, and abandons all those who are entitled to its protection but add to its weight and impede its progress, it must be able to march by roads through which it cannot be followed with any prospect of being overtaken by an army which has not made the same sacrifices.

"It is impossible to say too much of the exertions of the troops. The weather has been very bad indeed. Since the 13th the rain has been constant, and the roads in this difficult country almost impracticable. But they have persevered in the pursuit to the last; and have been generally on their march from daylight in the morning till dark."[1]

Than that brief campaign upon the Douro, there never was any on which two generals might more safely have risked their former fame,—never a series of operations, where, relatively in conquest and defeat, the victor and the vanquished enhanced so much a previous reputation. Wellesley's. plans were soundly conceived and admirably executed; and the extent of his success was only equalled by the rapidity with which it was accomplished. "In twenty-eight days he had restored public confidence, provided a defence against one adversary, and having marched two hundred miles through a rugged country, and forced the passage of a great river, caused his other opponent to flee over the frontier, without artillery or baggage; and this was effected in face of a veteran army under an approved commander, by levies hastily collected, and troops but recently debarked; the former unformed by discipline, untried in battle, and not three weeks before in a state of open mutiny. With such means Soult was hurried from the scene of his recent successes, and that with a precipitation which in ruinous results was only equalled by the disastrous retreat upon Coruña.

[1] Wellington Despatches.

The rapid marching of troops, unencumbered with the *matériel* an army must carry with it to be serviceable, soon outstrips the pursuit of a body perfect in all its equipment for the field, and Sir Arthur Wellesley discontinued further efforts to overtake his more active enemy. A threatening movement on Estremadura had confirmed him in his determination to return directly to the Tagus.

In accordance with this decision, the British brigades behind Salamonde were ordered to retrograde towards Oporto, and were immediately followed by the corps under Marshal Beresford.

Sir Arthur Wellesley approached the Tagus by easy marches; for bad weather, and the recent fatigues which the English army had undergone, and to which previous service had not inured them, had materially reduced the efficiency of many of the regiments. Sickness was generally prevalent, and the mortality among the troops great; but it was not the diminution of physical strength only which the British General had to regret—the *morale* of the army was sadly deteriorated—the soldiery had become disorderly and unmanageable—and robbery and violence were matters of such frequent recurrence as to cause serious uneasiness to the Commander-in-Chief. Indeed, the misconduct of the troops was now so flagrant that nothing but the severest measures could reform it; and to repress the licentiousness of some regiments punishment was inflicted to the utmost extent. The Provost Marshal, a functionary, to the credit of the British army, but seldom needed, had now extensive employment; for the halter alone could deter men from the commission of crime, on whom all means beside had been tried without effect. The frequent allusions made in his correspondence to this insubordination of the troops, shows the extent to which the mischief had arrived, and proves how much the exertions of Sir Arthur Wellesley must have been taxed to reclaim the soldiery, and re-establish that dis-

cipline and good order for which the British army was afterwards so pre-eminently distinguished.

While Sir Arthur Wellesley was engaged in accommodating the differences upon points of rank which had arisen among the superior officers of the British service, and repressing the disorders of the troops, time insensibly was passing on, and still the army remained in the encampment at Abrantes. Other difficulties had arisen. Reinforcements, amounting to fully five thousand men, had reached headquarters; but nearly an equal number were in hospital, and fifteen hundred were detached on escort and other duties. The commissariat was in everything defective; the means of transport insufficient; the army were without shoes; and, worse than all, Sir Arthur Wellesley's money was exhausted, and he was without any means by which he could obtain a fresh supply. The operations of the English General were consequently impeded for above a month, and solely from this serious want—a hardship of which he bitterly complained, "and which led him to suspect at the time that Government had engaged in an enterprise beyond their strength. In truth, however, the finances of Great Britain, as the event proved, were fully equal to the strain, and the difficulty arose entirely from the extraordinary scarcity of *specie*, at that crisis, in the British island, arising partly from the profuse issue of paper to carry on the prodigious mercantile operations and national expenditure of the period, and partly from the vast consumption and requisitions of the French and Austrian armies during the campaign on the Danube."[1]

While waiting for the means, without which it was impossible to advance, Wellesley had ample time to consider the course of operations best to be adopted; and he despatched two officers in his confidence to make the necessary arrangements for a combined movement with Cuesta, captain-general of the army with which he was to unite. Nothing, however,

[1] Alison's *History of Europe.*

could be less satisfactory than Cuesta's communications with the officers whom Sir Arthur had despatched to the Spanish camp. Age and infirmities had clouded intellects never remarkable for acuteness; and the plainest military truths were explained again and again before Cuesta could understand their import. Unfortunately, he had entertained some stupid prejudices against the English generally; and hence, any proposition emanating with Sir Arthur Wellesley which did not exactly accord with the humour he might be in at the moment it was made, was resisted with insurmountable obstinacy.

On the 10th of June the British General set out to visit his ally, and was received at the flying bridge upon the Teitar by a Spanish escort of light cavalry, who contrived to lose their way, and detain him on the road until night had fallen.

A long conference took place after breakfast on the 11th; and it terminated apparently to the satisfaction of both commanders. "When it came to a close, dinner was announced; and we sat down, about three o'clock, to about forty dishes, the principal ingredients in which were garlic and onions. Our meal did not occupy us long; and on Cuesta retiring, as was his custom, to enjoy his siesta, we mounted our horses, and rode out into the camp. By these means we were enabled to see more of the regiments separately than we had seen during the torchlight review. We saw, however, nothing which served in any degree to raise our opinion of the general efficiency of our allies; and we returned to our host, at a late hour, more than ever impressed with the persuasion, that if the deliverance of the Peninsula was to be effected at all, it must be done, not by the Spaniards, but by ourselves."[1]

The interview at the Casa del Puerto seemed to have confirmed Sir Arthur Wellesley in a determination to force Victor to a battle. Indeed, that he should not have done so before was a subject of surprise to many. But the diffi-

[1] Lord Londonderry's Narrative.

culties their General had to contend with were overlooked, his own responsibility never taken into consideration, and in an eagerness for action, the consequences of hasty operations were neither weighed nor regarded by those whose ardour had outstripped their judgment. Sir Arthur Wellesley exercised that cautious discretion which public opinion, no matter how strongly expressed, could never shake. He knew his own means; he formed a just opinion of how little he had to expect from the efforts of his allies; and, what none took into account, there was a controlling influence in England that at that time, and for long afterwards, pressed him heavily.

"The English Cabinet, although improvident in its preparations, was very fearful of misfortune, and the General durst not risk the safety of a single brigade, except for a great object, lest a slight disaster should cause the army to be recalled. Thus he was obliged to curb his naturally enterprising disposition; and to this burthen of Ministerial incapacity, which he bore even to the battle of Salamanca, may be traced that over-caution which has been so often censured as a fault, not only by military writers, but by Napoleon, who, judging from appearances, erroneously supposed it to be a characteristic of the man, and often rebuked his generals for not taking advantage thereof."[1]

The arrangement of attack, as settled by Sir Arthur Wellesley and Cuesta, was that Victor should be assailed on front and flanks. The front attack was to be intrusted to the Spanish General; the right was to be assaulted by the British, who should cross the Téitar, and march on Oropesa; while Venegas should operate to the southward of Madrid. Leaving Toledo on the left, he was to push forward to the Upper Tagus; and should Sebastiani disregard his movements, he was to cross the river, and march direct upon the capital. On the opposite flanks, Wilson's corps, reinforced by some

[1] Napier.

Spanish battalions, was to threaten Madrid and operate a diversion on that side.

The French army under Victor, joined by the detachments brought by King Joseph from Sebastiani's corps, and amounting in the whole to about 35,000 men, were concentrated in the neighbourhood of Talavera and on the Alberche. Victor, well advised of the allied movements, strengthened his posts at Talavera, and despatched a regiment of light cavalry to support a movable column he had placed in observation of the Upper Alberche, at Escalona. On the 21st he changed his line of march from Madrid to the road of Toledo, removed his park to Cevola, and united two divisions of infantry behind the Alberche. On the 22d the allies, in two columns, moved on Talavera, to dislodge the French posts; and Cuesta, who marched by the high road, overtook Victor's rear-guard at Gamonal.

Anxious to attack without delay, Sir Arthur Wellesley in vain sought the information he required, and which he might have expected to receive from the inhabitants of Talavera. Respecting the numbers and disposition of the enemy they affected to be in total ignorance. The position, however, was viewed in reverse from the mountains on the left bank of the Tagus by some officers of Sir Arthur's staff.

That night the British General rode to the Spanish headquarters to arrange some unsettled details for the action of the morrow; but Cuesta was in bed, and his aide-de-camp refused to awake him. At three o'clock the English divisions were under arms—and at seven the Spanish staff were sound asleep. At last the old man was roused, and apprised that the British brigades had been "for four hours under arms, and ready to commence the attack;" and Cuesta finally declined assisting, objecting to fight because the day was Sunday. Victor in the meantime remained quietly in a position he knew to be vulnerable in many points, and seemed so much at ease as to warrant a strong suspicion that the

communications between the allied generals had been treacherously disclosed; and in fact Cuesta himself was at the time heavily suspected.

The country between Talavera and the Alberche is level, and interspersed with olive-grounds and thickets; while in a parallel direction to the Tagus, and some two miles distance from the town, on the northern side, the plain terminates in a chain of steep round hillocks. A mountain-ridge, separated from these by a rugged valley, rises abruptly behind, and interposes between the waters of the Teitar and the Alberche. Talavera stands on the northern bank of the Tagus, the houses reaching down to the water's edge. The two armies were drawn up in line; the British on the left, extending from the town nearly to the Sierra de Gata, its extreme flank occupying a bold height near Alatuza de Segusella, having in its front a difficult ravine, and on its flank a deep valley. To the Spaniards the right was assigned. Their battalions were stationed among olive groves, with walls and fences interspersed, and an embankment running along the road, that formed an excellent breast-work, and rendered their position nearly unassailable. It was necessary to secure the point of junction where the British right touched Cuesta's left; and to effect this, ten guns were placed in battery on the summit of a bold knoll, with an English division to protect them, and a strong cavalry corps in reserve. The order of battle was continued from the Spanish left by General Campbell's division, formed in a double line. Sherbrooke's, in single formation, was next upon the right, Mackenzie's division, which was intended to form a second and supporting line, being still in advance towards the Alberche. Hill's division completed the whole, by taking post on the high grounds which here touched the valley; but by some oversight the ridge which crowned this chain of heights was not directly occupied. The whole line, thus displayed, was about two miles in length, "the left being

covered by the valley between the hill and the mountain; and from this valley a ravine, or water-course, opened deeply in the front of the British left, but being gradually obliterated in the flat ground about the centre of the line. Part of the British cavalry was with General Mackenzie, and in the plain in front of the left, and part behind the great redoubt at the junction of the allied troops. The British and Germans under arms that day were somewhat above ninteen thousand sabres and bayonets, with thirty guns,"[1]—a force fearfully inferior,—for Joseph crossed the Alberche with fifty thousand men and eighty pieces of artillery.

Before daybreak on the 27th the French army were under arms. At noon, the first corps reached the heights of Salinas, preceded by the cavalry under Latour Maubourg, and followed by the fourth corps, the guard, and the reserve. Although the dust betrayed the marching of the allied divisions as they moved to their respective positions, the wooded country, which stretched from the Tagus to the heights, effectually concealed the movements of the English General. Victor, who was intimately acquainted with the localities, accurately pointed out the position of the allies, and recommended an immediate attack; and at three o'clock in the evening the French columns advanced by the royal road, and that of Casa de Salinas, and the memorable battle of Talavera commenced.

The contest opened under unfavourable auspices; for by the first movement of the French, Sir Arthur Wellesley was nearly made a prisoner. The divisions of Lapisse and Ruffin crossed the Alberche, and advanced so rapidly on the Casa de Salinas, that the English General, who was at the moment in the house, had scarcely time allowed to enable him to mount and ride off."[2]

[1] Napier.

[2] "Sir Arthur had another narrow escape the preceding day; while he was reconnoitring, a three-pound shot was fired at him with so good an aim, that it cut a bough from a tree close to his head."—*Southey.*

This was the most decisive advantage the French gained. By some unaccountable inattention, no pickets were in front, and the French columns were immediately upon the British brigades, before the latter were apprised that the enemy were advancing. Two young battalions—both Irish,[1] and both afterwards remarkable, where all were brave, for their daring in attack and their indifference under fire—got into confusion, and were forced back in some disorder. The 45th and part of the 60th checked the enemy's advance, and Wellesley, in person, directed the retreat of the infantry. In safety they reached the position, covered by the cavalry—Mackenzie taking his ground behind the Guards—Donkin forming on the high ground to the left, that had not as yet been occupied, while the cavalry drew up in column in the rear.

At this period the battle was seriously endangered—Cuesta, from the strength of his position, might have been considered safe enough; but as it appeared, no local advantages could secure his wretched troops, or render them trustworthy for an hour. While Victor, "animated by the success of his first operation, followed Donkin with Villatte's division and the whole of his light cavalry and guns, the fourth corps and French reserve, which were directed against the right, sent their cavalry forward to induce the Spaniards to unmask their line of battle. 'The French horsemen rode boldly up to the front, and commenced skirmishing with their pistols, and the Spaniards answered them with a general discharge of small arms; but then, ten thousand infantry, and all the artillery, breaking their ranks, fled to the rear: the artillerymen carried off their horses; the infantry threw away their arms, and the Adjutant-General O'Donogue was amongst the foremost of the fugitives. Nay, Cuesta himself was in movement towards the rear. The panic spread, and the French would fain have charged; but Sir Arthur Wellesley, who was at hand, immediately flanked the main

[1] The 87th and 88th regiments.

road with some English squadrons: the ditches on the other side rendered the country impracticable; and the fire of musketry being renewed by those Spaniards who remained, the enemy lost some men, and finally retreated in disorder." [1] The confusion occasioned in the rear by this panic is indescribable: cattle, baggage, and stores were in all directions hurried off; while the runaways spread over the whole country, reporting that the English were cut to pieces and the French cavalry already at their heels. During the night a large proportion of the fugitives were overtaken by their own horsemen, and driven back at the sword's point to the position they had abandoned; but fully six thousand of Cuesta's troops could not be recovered, and were returned, as missing in the morning.

Night had now set in, and encouraged by the singular confusion among the Spaniards on the right, and perceiving that the apex of the ridge upon the left was unoccupied, Victor determined, by a sudden assault, to carry what he justly considered to be the key of the English position. Ruffin was instantly ordered forward with his division, supported by Villatte's, while Lapisse, by a false attack upon the Germans, was intended to effect a diversion. The attack was furiously made, and at first gallantly repelled by Donkin's brigade; but superior numbers succeeded, the English left was turned, and the ridge behind it crowned with the enemy. General Hill, who had advanced to Donkin's assistance with the 48th regiment, in the twilight mistook the French for British stragglers, and rode hastily into their ranks. His Brigade-Major was shot dead, and his own horse seized by a grenadier. The General, however, shook him off, galloped down the hill, placed himself at the head of the 29th, led them up the heights, and gallantly restored the battle. It was so dark that the blaze of musketry alone displayed the forms of the assailants. The leading company

[1] Napier.

of the 29th poured in a volley when close to the bayonets of the enemy. The glorious cheer of the British infantry accompanied the charge, which succeeded. The rest of the regiment arrived in quick succession, forming on the summit a close column, which speedily drove everything before it. The enemy was pursued down the hill, abandoning the level ground on its top, thickly strewed with dead bodies or wounded men. No second attempt was for some time made to carry this most important point, and the 29th remained in possession of the ground, lying on their arms in the midst of fallen enemies.

The contest ended for that night. Two thousand gallant soldiers were already slain, and not an inch of ground was yet won by the assailants. Both sides, tired of slaughter, wished naturally for a short term of repose; fires were lighted along the lines, and a temporary quiet reigned in the bivouacs of the wearied soldiery.

Soon after daybreak a general movement of the enemy "gave note of preparation." Two heavy columns of chosen troops, the grenadiers of Lapisse's division, were formed in front of the height in question. "The formation was marked by a furious cannonade, under cover of which the columns pressed forward; and desperate and numerous were the efforts which they made to render themselves masters of the summit; but nothing could exceed the gallantry and steadiness of the brave men who opposed them. The brigades of General Tilson and R. Stewart were here; they permitted the enemy again and again to arrive within a few paces of the ridge, and then drove them back in admirable style with the bayonet, till, disheartened by so many repulses, they at last retreated altogether, leaving the ground covered with their dead."[1]

The fighting had lasted without intermission from five in the morning. The slaughter on both sides had been im-

[1] Lord Londonderry's Narrative.

mense, and the heat became intolerable. By a sort of tacit understanding the struggle ceased on both sides about nine o'clock, each availing themselves of the brief repose which both so much required. The French appeared dispirited; for three hours not a movement was made, nor a musket was discharged; "and it was a question with us whether we should advance, and in our turn become the assailants, or remain quietly where we were, and await the result of the enemy's deliberations."

During the cessation of hostilities, an incident of rare occurrence in war produced an interesting display of generous feeling between two brave and noble-minded enemies. A small stream, tributary to the Tagus, flowed through a part of the battle-ground, and separated the combatants. During the pause that the heat of the weather and the weariness of the troops had produced, both armies went to the banks of the rivulet for water. The men approached each other fearlessly, threw down their caps and muskets, chatted to each other like old acquaintances, and exchanged their canteens and wine-flasks. All asperity of feeling seemed forgotten. To a stranger, they would have appeared more like an allied force, than men hot from a ferocious conflict, and only gathering strength and energy to recommence it anew. But a still nobler rivalry for the time existed: the interval was employed in carrying off the wounded, who lay intermixed upon the hard-contested field; and to the honour of both be it told, that each endeavoured to extricate the common sufferers, and remove their unfortunate friends and enemies, without distinction. Suddenly, the bugles sounded, the drums beat to arms; many of the rival soldiery shook hands, and parted with expressions of mutual esteem, and in ten minutes after they were again at the bayonet's point.

The assault of the fourth corps on the British centre was as furious and disastrous as that of Ruffin's. Sebastiani's attack was boldly made, and the French came on with an

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assured courage that seemed resolved to sweep away every obstacle that opposed it. Covered by a cloud of light troops, the columns passed the broken ground with imposing determination, only to encounter opponents still more determined than themselves. The English regiments, putting the French skirmishers aside, met the advancing columns with loud shouts, and, breaking in on their front, and lapping their flanks with fire, gave them no respite, and pushed them back with a terrible carnage. Ten guns were taken; but, as General Campbell prudently forbore pursuit, the French rallied on their supports, and made a show of attacking again. Vain attempt! The British artillery and musketry played furiously upon their masses, and a Spanish regiment of cavalry charging on their flank at the same time, the whole retired in disorder, and the victory was secured in that quarter.

The most daring and the most disastrous effort of the day remains to be narrated. The French, still intent upon seizing the left of the position, moved up the valley in force; and Anson's light brigade of cavalry was ordered to charge the columns as they came forward. The ground was treacherous—flat, apparently to the eye, while a dangerous and narrow ravine secured the French infantry completely. The word was given: the brigade advanced at a steady canter; a plain was, as they believed, before them, and in full blood, what should check their career? Colonel Elley, who was some lengths in advance of the 23d, was the first who discovered the obstacle in their road, and vainly endeavoured to check the charge, and apprise his companions of the dangerous ground they had to pass; "but, advancing with such velocity, the line was on the verge of the stream before his signs could be either understood or attended to. Under any circumstances this must have been a serious occurrence in a cavalry charge; but when it is considered that four or five hundred dragoons were assailing two divisions of infantry,

unbroken, and fully prepared for the onset, to have persevered at all was highly honourable to the regiment.

"At this moment the enemy, formed in squares, opened his tremendous fire. A change immediately took place. Horses rolled on the earth; others were seen flying back, dragging their unhorsed riders with them. The German hussars pulled up; but although the line of the 23d was broken, still that regiment galloped forward. The confusion was increased; but no hesitation took place in the individuals of this gallant corps. The survivors rushed on with, if possible, accelerated pace, passing between the flank of the square, now one general blaze of fire, and the building on its left."

It was strange that, under such circumstances, men should think of anything but securing a retreat. The Germans, on arriving at the brink of the ravine, had reined sharply up; and though they suffered heavily from the French musketry, galloped out of fire, and re-formed behind Bassecourt's Spanish division, which was in observation in the rear. Struggling through the water-course, the survivors of the 23d, as they gained the bank in twos and threes, formed, and passing the French infantry at speed, "fell with inexpressible fury on a brigade of chasseurs in the rear." A momentary success attended this reckless display of valour; but a body of Polish lancers and Westphalian light-horse came up, and to resist such odds were hopeless.

"The situation of the 23d was now very critical. To return directly from whence the regiment had advanced, was impracticable. By doing so, the surviving soldiers must have again sustained a close and deadly fire from the French square; and although the chasseurs had given way, another line of cavalry was in their front. To their right was the whole French army; to their left, and in rear of the enemy's infantry, was the only possible line of escape. This was adopted. In small parties or singly, they again regained the valley,

reforming in rear of General Fane's brigade, the advance of which had been countermanded after the unsuccessful result of the first charge was ascertained."[1]

A furious attack made upon Sherbrooke's division was among the most gallant efforts of the day. Under a storm of artillery, the French columns fairly came forward, as if they intended to leave the issue to "cold iron;" but they never crossed a bayonet, were charged in turn, and repelled with serious loss.

Who has ever seen an unbroken line preserved in following up a successful bayonet charge? The Guards, carried forward by victorious excitement, advanced too far, and found themselves assailed by the French reserve, and mowed down by an overwhelming fire. "They fell back; but as whole sections were swept away, their ranks became disordered, and nothing but their stubborn gallantry prevented a total *déroute.* Their situation was most critical; had the French cavalry charged home nothing could have saved them. Lord Wellington saw the danger, and speedily despatched support. A brigade of horse was ordered up, and our regiment[2] moved from the heights we occupied to assist our hard-pressed comrades. We came on at double-quick, and formed in the rear by companies, and through the intervals in our line the broken ranks retreated. A close and well-directed volley from us arrested the progress of the victorious French, while, with amazing celerity and coolness, the Guards rallied and re-formed, and in a few minutes advanced in turn to support us. As they came on, the men gave a loud huzza. An Irish regiment to the right answered it with a thrilling cheer. It was taken up from regiment to regiment, and passed along the English line; and that wild shout told the advancing enemy that British valour was indomitable. The leading files of the French halted—turned—fell back—and never made another effort."

[1] Sherer. [2] The 48th.

It may be readly imagined that the loss entailed upon both armies by a sanguinary and protracted struggle like that of Talavera must be enormous. On the British side, Generals Mackenzie and Lanawarth fell, and the entire casualties amounted to 5423. The French loss was infinitely greater. According to the returns of Jourdan and Semele, they had two general officers and 944 killed, 6294 wounded, and 156 made prisoners—being in all 7389. But English and Spanish writers assert that their casualties were much greater, and return the total loss at fully 10,000 men. The battle ended at about six o'clock, and after that hour scarcely a shot was heard. Both armies occupied the positions of the morning, and the British bivouacked on the field, with little food and no shelter; while the dead lay silently around, and the moans of the wounded broke sadly on the ear as they were conveyed all through the night to the hospitals in Salamanca.

The total failure of Lapisse's attack, who was mortally wounded in leading his division on, after it had been shattered and disordered by the closely-delivered volleys of the English regiments, was the signal for a general retreat. The French, covered by a tremendous fire of artillery, retired to their own position, leaving seventeen guns in the possession of the victors. The marvel is that any trophy could be won. The English, worn out by fatigue and literally starving—with now scarcely fourteen thousand men embattled—were incapable of further exertion; while their useless allies, though fresh and undamaged, dared not be employed, as they were not even to be trusted when behind banks and breastworks, and were utterly unequal to attempt the simplest evolutions. A damp cold night succeeded a burning day. Without food, covering, or even water, the British bivouacs were cheerless enough; but except from wounded men, not a murmur was heard—not a complaint escaped. When morning broke, the English brigades—"feeble and few, but

fearless still"—rose at the first tap of the drum, and once more stood gallantly to their arms.

At daybreak on the 29th, the French army was discovered formed upon the heights of Salinas, having crossed the Alberche during the night. Relieved from all apprehension of a renewed attack, the removal of his wounded to Talavera, where he was endeavouring to establish hospitals for their reception, engrossed the attention of Sir Arthur Wellesley; and although it was afterwards ascertained that a month's provisions were secreted in the town, it required his greatest exertions to obtain a bare sufficiency to keep his troops from starving, while the wounded were sinking fast, not from the severity of their injuries, but from the actual want of common nourishment. The brutality of Cuesta's character evidenced itself in his conduct towards the ally who had preserved him. He not only refused assistance to the wounded, but declined even to aid in the burial of the dead. Intent upon an occupation more german to his ferocious disposition, instead of endeavouring to improve the advantages of a victory that had been won for him, Cuesta occupied himself in decimating the regiments who had been panic-stricken on the 27th; but influenced by the strong remonstrances of the British General, he relaxed his severity so far as to re-decimate the unfortunate wretches upon whom the lot of death had fallen, and only six officers and forty men were slaughtered. Had not "his cruelty been mitigated by the earnest intercession of Sir Arthur Wellesley, more men would have been destroyed in cold blood by this savage old man than had fallen in the battle."[1]

On the day after the engagement a welcome reinforcement joined the English army. By an unparalleled exertion, the light brigade, consisting of the 43d, 52d, and 95th (Rifles) arrived on the 29th upon the battle ground, and immediately took outpost duty. The regiments, after a march of twenty

[1] Napier.

miles, were bivouacked for the night, when intelligence reached their commanding officer that Sir Arthur Wellesley was on the eve of a battle. After a short halt, the brigade got under arms with a fixed determination to share the glory of the coming field. As they advanced, Spanish fugitives, hurrying off in crowds, informed them that the struggle was already ended, that the English army was totally defeated, and Sir Arthur Wellesley killed. "Indignant at this shameful scene, the troops hastened, rather than slackened, the impetuosity of their pace;" and leaving only seventeen stragglers behind, in twenty-six hours they accomplished a march of sixty-two English miles. To estimate this extraordinary effort made by these splendid regiments, it should be recollected that it was executed in heavy marching order over a country where water was scarce, and beneath a burning sun.

Never did a General, after the achievement of a glorious victory, so speedily find himself environed by difficulties, and these accumulating with alarming celerity. On the 30th Wellesley was apprised that Soult was moving towards the pass of Banos; and aware how important its possession was for the mutual security of Cuesta and himself, he importuned that obstinate old man to detach a Spanish corps without delay to strengthen its feeble garrison. Cuesta refused, wavered, procrastinated, and consented; and when the French were known to have been on the 1st of August within one day's march of the pass, then, and then only, the Spanish General detached Bassecourt to its relief, he being four marches distant. The consequences may be anticipated. Soult obtained possession of Banos without expending a cartridge, reached Plasencia, where he obtained artillery and stores from Madrid, and was now at the head of fifteen thousand veteran soldiers, recovered from their late fatigues, and in their equipment perfect in every arm.

While a period of general inaction succeeded the affair at

Banos, events of some moment, in a military and political view, were occurring. Wellesley was appointed camp-marshal of the Spanish armies, honoured by a flattering address, and presented with some valuable horses by the central Junta. The latter, with the address, he accepted, and also the nomination of Captain-General, subject, nevertheless, to the consent of his own sovereign, but the pay and emoluments attached to the appointment he firmly and respectfully declined.

It was gratifying to the victor of Talavera to know that in the highest quarter his services were properly appreciated. On receiving official intelligence of Joseph Buonaparte's defeat, the king raised Sir Arthur to the peerage, and created him Baron Douro of Wellesley, and Viscount Wellington of Talavera, and of Wellington, in the county of Somerset. A pension of £2000 was settled upon him and the two next heirs to the title in succession.

Two official changes simultaneously occurred, and it is difficult to say which was the more loudly called for.

Mr. Frere, after perpetrating an infinity of mischief, was at last recalled, and the Marquis of Wellesley sent out to supersede him. The brother of the victor of Talavera was enthusiastically welcome in the Peninsula; his landing was marked by every token of satisfaction; and at Cadiz and Seville his reception was ardent, encouraging—and delusive. A very short time served to show that Spanish gratitude was confined to empty professions; "and the first despatches from Sir Arthur opened to him a disheartening prospect."

The other event of moment was the forced resignation of Cuesta. His atrocious misconduct even a Spanish Junta could not overlook, and Frere himself memorialised for his removal. A paralysis in one leg formed a fitting plea on which to ground a resignation; and when Lord Wellesley had notified, through Garay, to the Government that all relations and mutual support must end between the British

and Spanish armies unless Cuesta was dismissed, the latter obtained permission to retire to the baths of Alhama, and Eguia, the next in seniority, was nominated to the chief command.

But "Lord Wellesley had arrived too late; all the mischief that petulance, folly, bad faith, violence, and ignorance united could inflict, was already accomplished; and while he was vainly urging a vile, if not a treacherous Government, to provide sustenance for the soldiers, Sir Arthur withdrew the latter from a post where the vultures, in their prescience of death, were already congregating."[1]

The British headquarters were accordingly removed to Merida, while the light brigade fell back on Valencia de Alcantara. These movements sufficiently evinced Sir Arthur Wellesley's determination to withdraw his army from a country which, after all the devotion and successes of their allies, had been found superlatively ungrateful. That decision had due effect. The Junta was astounded, the people trembled for the consequences, and all were in dismay. Too late, promises were held out that the wants of the army should be supplied, as specious as any which had been plighted, and with no better certainty of being realised. The earnestness with which the Junta expressed their terror, and the strong assurances they offered of an ardent and an honest support, induced Lord Wellesley to suggest to his brother the necessity of his reconsidering how far an instant retreat into Portugal would be judicious. But Sir Arthur was not to be betrayed again by hollow professions; and although he consented to halt a few days at Merida, where he could obtain supplies for his army, and give time for the popular ferment to abate, he peremptorily refused to take up the line of the Guadiana, or co-operate with the Spanish armies again. He justly observed, that the line of the Tagus, where Eguia was posted, was so particularly

[1] Napier.

strong, that if the Spaniards could maintain themselves at all, there was the place they could most easily effect it. Sir Arthur concluded by promising to occupy the frontier, hang upon the enemy's flanks, and prevent him, unless he came in great force, from passing the Guadiana. These reasons would have satisfied Lord Wellesley that his brother's judgment was correct, had not other circumstances already done so.

It was full time, indeed, for the British General to remove his troops. Regiments, a few weeks before capable of exertions that were never equalled during the remainder of the Peninsular contest, were now unable to get through an ordinary march; and not only in numbers, but in strength, Sir Arthur was miserably reduced. The handful of troops whom he now commanded was composed of second battalions—of mere youths, both officers and men—made certainly of different stuff, and inferior in stamina to those whom Sir John Moore had led. One half of the soldiery were fitter for the hospital than the field; and Wellesley was threatened on every side by an enemy four times his own number, and adding daily to their strength and general efficiency. As if nothing should be wanting to complete the embarrassment of the English commander, victory had crowned the French arms with success. Austria was once more prostrate at the feet of Napoleon; and the conquerors of Wagram would, there was little doubt, soon be marching on the Pyrenees. It was also ascertained that the enemy were active in their preparations to enter Portugal by Ciudad Rodrigo and Almeida; and, if the attempt were made, it was doubtful whether it could have been resisted.

But Wellesley did not despair. He had already expressed a confidence, that, if driven from Spain, he could still maintain himself in Portugal, "and into Portugal he prepared to remove, where, in comfortable cantonments, the health of his sick might be restored, and the strength of his weary and

convalescents recruited."[1] With him, to decide and act were synonymous. The order was given, and, in five marches, the British army leisurely fell back, took up the line of the Guadiana, and headquarters were established at Badajoz.

[1] Napier.

CHAPTER VI.

THE cantonments of the British army on the line of the Guadiana were selected for their general conveniency; and where the soldiers could be best supplied, and the cavalry obtain forage, the different brigades were quartered. In autumn, the insalubrity of Estremadura is proverbial: fevers and agues prevail; and men already severely visited by dysentery, were exposed to a worse disease, which, from its virulence, threatened to produce more calamitous results even than the sword itself. From its ravages no class was excepted: the soldier and his officer suffered in common; and the iron frame of that chief, which had endured an Indian sun and borne the rigours of a Belgian winter, yielded for a season to the pestilential influence of this unhealthy province. For two days Lord Wellington was unable to keep the saddle; and—a most unusual thing for him to do—while the army was retiring from Jaraicejo to Badajoz, he travelled in a carriage. At headquarters he was slightly indisposed again, but he rallied speedily; and, fortunately for the cause of Europe, combated and conquered a malady, under which the youngest and the hardiest had sunk.

But the inaction of winter quarters to Lord Wellington

brought "no day of rest." The duties of his bureau were manifold and laborious; and the few hours he could steal from the confinement an extensive correspondence required, were devoted to field sports or consumed in visiting his hospitals. Early in October he set out for Lisbon; and the object of that journey engrossed the undivided attention of the army. The general belief was that its final departure from the Peninsula was an event not distant, and indeed all circumstances tended to strengthen this opinion. The melancholy state to which sickness had reduced the English battalions, the proven worthlessness of their Spanish allies, the astounding successes which had attended the arms of Napoleon, and placed the ascendency of France upon a pinnacle of strength it had never reached before; while his union with "a daughter of the Cæsars" to all appearance had established its solidity,—all these things denoted that the abandonment of Portugal was an inevitable event, and that an army, brave and successful in every previous trial, must of necessity yield to a power no longer to be opposed, and decline farther contest with a nation "emerged victorious from eighteen years of warfare."[1]

Such were the speculations which Lord Wellington's absence from headquarters had occasioned; but none could be more erroneous. Instead of preparations for an embarkation, he was devising measures for holding the country to the last, and, with a singular prescience of events, employed in a personal examination of the ground, on which he afterwards gave a fatal check to the progress of French conquest. To plan the lines of Torres Vedras had been the object of his journey; and the ability that designed these extensive defences was only equalled by the promptness with which they were executed. If the architect of St. Paul's trusted for immortality to his works, Wellington might have safely rested a soldier's fame on his; for "neither the Roman in

[1] Alison.

ancient, nor Napoleon in modern times, have left such a monument of their power and perseverance."[1]

The sickness in the British army so rapidly increased, that the average amount of deaths exceeded 900 monthly. The malady of the country required that wine and spirits should be liberally administered; and unfortunately, the quantity which the commissariat could procure was unequal to the demand, and irregularly issued; and bark, a specific in intermittent fever, was not to be obtained. The wounded recovered quickly, but the hospitals at Elvas and Estremos were crowded with the sick. Happily the season changed—the weather became cold and frosty. Clothing and supplies reached the British cantonments; and in the middle of December Wellington quitted his unhealthy quarters, and, crossing the Tagus, directed his march upon the Mondego. This change in the position of the army was attended with the best results; and those who had survived the malaria of Estremadura, felt the influence of a healthier climate, and recovered rapidly. Convalescents from the hospitals joined their regiments in large numbers; and though the *morale* of the army had deteriorated, every day its health improved, and its general efficiency was re-established.

While the rapid movements of the Spanish Duke had enabled him to seize the Isla de Leon, and secure the important city which so entirely depended upon its possession, Romana, with sound judgment, threw into Badajoz a garrison of sufficient strength to render unavailing any sudden effort the enemy might make to obtain it. Wellington, with his usual quickness, had foreseen the quarter upon which the French would direct their operations; and from the positions of their corps, as well as from the general outline of the country, he concluded that by the north of Beira and the Alemtejo, they would attempt an entrance into Portugal. If their attacks should be made upon these points, they must,

[1] Alison.

as a necessary precaution, reduce Ciudad Rodrigo and Almeida, before they could hazard an advance upon either Lisbon or Oporto. With such convictions, Lord Wellington took up a line best suited to defend the frontier. It formed the segment of a circle, of which the convex part was opposed to the quarter from whence the invasion was expected. Guardo, Celerico, Pinhel, and the west bank of the Coa, were its four main points: the Coa, with its tributary streams, flowing in front of the line along the greater part of its extent.

At this period, Massena's appointment to the command of the army destined for the conquest of Portugal was officially communicated. The report had been rife for months that Napoleon himself would "drive the leopard to the sea," but other objects engrossed him. Wearied with the disputes and jealousies which had distracted his lieutenants, the French Emperor selected one superior to them all both in rank and character. Massena's appointment seemed to be the signal for hostilities to commence; and on the 4th of June, Rodrigo was regularly invested.

"Ciudad Rodrigo is built on a rising ground, on the right bank of the Agueda, and has a double enceinte all round it. The interior wall is of an old construction, of the height of thirty-two feet, and is generally of bad masonry, without flanks, and with weak parapets and narrow ramparts. The exterior enclosure is a modern fausse-braie, of a low profile, constructed so far down the slope of the hill as to afford but little cover to the interior wall; and from the same defect of the rapid descent of the hill, the fausse-braie itself is very imperfectly covered by its glacis. On the eastern and southern sides there are ravelins to the fausse-braie, but in no part is there a covered-way, nor are there any countermines. Without the town, at the distance of three hundred yards, the suburbs are enclosed by a bad earthen entrenchment, hastily thrown up. The ground without the place is

generally flat, and the soil rocky, except on the north side, where there are two hills called the upper and the lower Teson: the one, at 180 yards from the works, rises nearly to the level of the ramparts, and the other, at 600 yards distance, to the height of thirteen feet above them. The soil on these hills is very stony, and during open weather in winter, water rises at the depth of six inches below the surface."[1]

All doubt that Rodrigo was to be regularly besieged ended when, on the 1st of June, Ney threw a trestle bridge over the Agueda at Caridad, and on the 5th another across the river at Carboneras. With a garrison of 5000 men, and a population of about the same extent, Andres Herrasti prepared to hold out; and the defence which the old man made proved him "every inch" a soldier.

No fortress was better defended, and none more furiously assailed—Ney "beginning his approaches where a General more sparing of his army would have terminated them." But this reckless expenditure of human life proved unavailing; and when Massena, on the 24th of June, assumed the command of "the grand army of Portugal," he found, by dear-bought experience, that the mode of attack hitherto adopted must be changed, and recourse had to the slower, but more certain operations, which Ney in his ardour had overlooked. On the 25th, the French batteries, armed with forty-six pieces of siege artillery, opened and maintained an unabated fire until the evening of the 28th, when the breach being twenty-five yards long, and deemed practicable, Ney sent in a summons, desiring Herrasti to choose "between an honourable capitulation and the terrible vengence of a victorious army;" but the old governor returned a firm refusal.

During these occurrences, no General was ever more painfully circumstanced than Lord Wellington. The salvos from Massena's guns sounded in the British camp, and the

[1] Jones's *Journal of the Sieges.*

musketry was heard distinctly at the outposts. The city held nobly out. The spirit of the Catalans pervaded the inhabitants of Rodrigo; and sexual weakness and bodily infirmity were forgotten when duty made a call. To succour the besieged was, with Lord Wellington, the object next his heart. One march would bring him to the city—and all expected that the attempt would be made. "The troops desired the enterprise—the Spaniards demanded it as a proof of good faith—the Portuguese, to keep the war away from their own country." Romana came specially from Badajoz to urge its necessity and offer his co-operation. Massena, in his proclamations, taxed his opponent with timidity, and accused him of breach of honour and good faith in allowing his ally's fortress to fall "without risking a shot to save them." Nothing, however, could shake the determination of the English General. Views and objects which none could penetrate occupied his thoughts. The course that others urged he saw was madness. He might succeed in bringing off a raw garrison at the expense of twice their number of good soldiers, and the result would be the loss of Portugal. Stern in his purpose, Wellington remained inflexible; and to his resolution not to stand the issue of a battle, the downfall of Napoleon's dynasty may be traced.

The fate of Rodrigo was sealed; but the city held out until the 11th, when the counterscarp having been blown in, and a breach formed, over which carriages might have passed, and the French columns formed, and only awaiting the signal to assault, Herrasti hoisted the white flag and surrendered.

This was followed by the fall of Almeida. On the 27th an explosion of the powder magazine having made a breach in the works and destroyed the whole town, the governor ot the place surrendered to Massena.

At this period of the war, the Guerillas, from being confined to some straggling bands of peasantry and smugglers,

named *Quadrillas*, had increased considerably in numbers, and become equally formidable from their incessant activity and the boldness of their exploits. Every Spanish army that was defeated added its best soldiers to the ranks of the *Partidas;* and while the more peaceful of the peasantry gladly returned to their homes, the more daring and determined naturally selected a life of wild and desperate adventure. As the wars of the Revolution opened a field for the display of military talent, and produced those inimitable soldiers whose victories obtained a martial reputation for France which stands in the records of nations without a parallel; so, as the regular armies of Spain disappeared, another and more formidable force sprang rapidly into existence, and names, which otherwise would have lived and died unknown, acquired a celebrity for courage or cruelty, or for both.

These desperate adventurers were commanded by men of the most dissimilar professions. All were distinguished by some *sobriquet*, and these were of the most opposite descriptions. Among the leaders were friars and physicians, cooks and artisans; while some were characterised by a deformity, and others named after the form of their waistcoat or hat. Worse epithets described many of the minor chiefs; truculence and spoliation obtained them titles; and, strange as it may appear, the most ferocious band that infested Biscay was commanded by a woman named Martina. So indiscriminating and unrelenting was this female monster in her murders of friends and foes, that Mina was obliged to direct a force against her. She was surprised, with the greater part of her banditti, and the whole were shot upon the spot.

The crisis of the campaign was now fast approaching. Massena moved forward on Viseu, and Wellington retired by the left bank of the Mondego. Leaving Craufurd's division and the cavalry on the Criz, at Martagoa, the

English General retired behind the Alva; and on the 22d of September the French concentrated at Viseu.

Massena's advance was not accomplished without annoyance. In accordance with the orders issued by Lord Wellington, the country, on either bank of the Mondego, had been wasted, the mills rendered unserviceable, the villages deserted, and the inhabitants removed from their dwellings, and obliged to hide themselves in the mountains. The partisan leaders hung upon the flanks of the French army, and occasionally showed themselves in the rear; while, taking advantage of the badness of the road having delayed Massena's military chest and reserve artillery, Trant made a bold attempt to seize both; and had the Portuguese militia been more manageable, there is little doubt that his success would have been equal to his daring. As it was, he created much confusion, carried off an hundred prisoners, delayed the enemy two marches, and thus gave Wellington ample time, had that been necessary, to establish his detached brigades securely in their positions at Busaco.

The morning of the 26th broke in cloudless beauty, and a more glorious sight was never presented to a soldier's view; indeed, "nothing could be conceived more enlivening, more interesting, or more varied than the scene from the heights of Busaco. Commanding a very extensive prospect to the eastward, the movements of the French army were distinctly perceptible; it was impossible to conceal them from the observation of the troops stationed along the whole range of the mountain; nor did this appear to be the object of the enemy. Rising grounds were covered with troops, cannon, or equipages: the widely extended country seemed to contain a host moving forward, or gradually condensing into numerous masses, checked in their progress by the grand natural barrier on which the allies were placed, and at the base of which it became

necessary to pause. In imposing appearance as to numerical strength, there has been rarely seen anything comparable to that of the enemy's army from Busaco; it was not alone an army encamped before us, but a multitude: cavalry, infantry, artillery, cars of the country, horses, tribes of mules with their attendants, sutlers, followers of every description, crowded the moving scene upon which Lord Wellington and his army looked down."[1]

The disposition of the British brigades had been changed and amended during the time that Massena took up in bringing forward his eighth corps. In the new arrangements, Hill's division crossed the road leading to Pena Cova; Leith was next upon the left, with the Lusitanian legion in reserve; the third division joined the fifth, supported by a Portuguese brigade; and the first division held the highest point of the Sierra between Picton and the convent. The fourth division closed the left, and covered the road to Milheada, where the cavalry were detached; "Park's brigade, forming an advanced guard to the first division, was posted half-way down the descent, and the light division, supported by a German brigade, occupied a piece of ground jutting out nearly half a mile in front of, and about two hundred feet lower than the convent, the space between being naturally scooped like the hollow of a wave before it breaks. Along the whole of the front, skirmishers were thrown out on the mountain-side, and about fifty pieces of artillery were disposed upon the salient points."[2]

The British army, during the night, lay in dense masses on the summit of the mountain. The sky was clear, and the dark rocky eminences rising on both sides of the pass were crowned by the fires of innumerable bivouacs. The veterans in the English army, accustomed to similar scenes of excitement, slept profoundly on their stony beds; but many of the younger soldiers, who were now to witness a

[1] Leith Hay. [2] Napier.

battle for the first time, were kept awake by the grandeur and solemnity of the scene around them. As the first streaks of dawn were beginning to appear over the eastern hills, a rustling noise was heard in the wooded dells which ran up to the crest of the mountains. It arose from the French outposts, who, stealing unobserved during the night, had thus got close to the outposts of the English position without being perceived. The alarm was instantly given, and the troops started to their arms at all points. It was full time, for in a few minutes more the French in two masses were upon them."[1]

The French attack was made in five columns, and on two distinct points, about a league apart from each other. Reynier, with two columns, mounted the hill at Antonio de Cantara, and Ney, with three, in front of the convent of Busaco. Reynier had less difficulties to overcome, as the face of the Sierra by which he advanced was more practicable; and, favoured by the mist, his skirmishers were mingled with the light troops of the third division, almost as soon as the pickets had discovered that the enemy were in motion. The allies resisted vigorously, and the British artillery swept the face of the Sierra with a destructive storm of grape; but the French pressed forward, forced the right of the division back, threw a Portuguese regiment into disorder, and gained the crest of the ridge between Picton's and Leith's divisions. The enemy instantly endeavoured to secure the height they had won with their advanced battalions, and, with the remainder of the corps, press rapidly along the ridge of the hill. But in front, volleys of musketry checked them—their flank was torn by the fire of the British guns, while the 45th and 88th came forward with the bayonet, and, charging furiously, drove all before them, and forced the shattered column down the hill, "the dead and dying strewing the way even to the bottom of the valley."

[1] Alison's *History of Europe.*

Reynier's leading regiments still held the summit of the height; and shrouded in the haze and partially unseen, they re-formed their ranks, while the third division was driving the rest of the column from the mountain. They had not, however, escaped the observation of General Leith, and he instantly advanced with his first brigade to the assistance of Picton. The 38th regiment was ordered to turn the right of the French; but, as that flank of the enemy rested upon a precipice on the reverse of the Sierra, it was impossible to effect it. Colonel Cameron saw the emergency, and deploying the 9th regiment into line under a furious fire, he charged in among rocks, forced the French with the bayonet from the crest, and secured it with his regiment from any second effort which the enemy might make to win it back. All now went well. "Hill's corps edged in towards the scene of action; the second brigade of Leith joined the first, and a great mass of fresh troops were thus concentrated, while Reynier had neither reserves nor guns to restore the fight."[1]

The greater difficulty of the ground rendered Ney's attacks still less successful, even for a time, than Reynier's had proved. Craufurd's disposition of the light division was masterly. Under a dipping of the ground between the convent and plateau, the 43d and 52d were formed in line; while higher up the hill, and closer to the convent, the Germans were drawn up. The rocks in front formed a natural battery for the guns; and the whole face of the Sierra was crowded with riflemen and Caçadores. As morning dawned a sharp and scattered musketry was heard among the broken hollows of the valley that separated the rival armies, and immediately the French presented themselves in three divisions; Loisson's mounting the face of the Sierra, Marchand's inclining leftwards, as if

[1] Napier.

intending to turn the right flank of the left division, and the third remaining in reserve.

The brigade of General Simon led the attack; and, reckless of the constant fusilade of the British light troops and the sweeping fire of the artillery, which literally ploughed through its advancing column from its leading to its last section, the enemy came steadily and quickly on. The horse artillery worked their guns with amazing rapidity —delivering round after round with such beautiful precision, that the wonder was how any body of men could advance under such a withering and incessant cannonade. But nothing could surpass the gallantry of the assailants. On they came, and in a few moments their skirmishers, "breathless and begrimed with powder," topped the ridge of the Sierra. The British guns were instantly withdrawn—the French cheers arose—and in another second their column topped the height.

General Craufurd, who had coolly watched the progress of the advance, called on the 43d and 52d to "Charge!" A cheer that pealed for miles over the Sierra answered the order, and "eighteen hundred British bayonets went sparkling over the brow of the hill." The head of the French column was overwhelmed in an instant; "both its flanks were lapped over by the English wings," while volley after volley, at a few yards distance, completed its destruction and marked with hundreds of its dead and dying, all down the face of the Sierra, the course of its murderous discomfiture. Some of the light troops continued slaughtering the broken columns nearly to the bottom of the hill, until Ney's guns opened from the opposite side and covered the escape of the relics of Simon's division.

When Simon's attack was finally repulsed, Marchand's brigade had gained a wood half-way up the Sierra, and threatened the centre of the position. But they never advanced beyond the cover of the pine trees. Pack's Por-

tuguese regiment held them firmly in check, the Guards showed themselves in force on the crest of the height, while Craufurd, now disengaged, turned a searching fire from his guns upon their flank. Ney, in person, sustained this hopeless contest for an hour, and then retired in despair, leaving the British position as unassailable as it had been previous to the general attack.

The roar of battle ended; and beyond now and then a dropping shot, Busaco was undisturbed,[1] and nothing indicated the recent conflict but the melancholy tokens which mark "a foughten field." In front of the light division the hill was thickly covered with the dead and dying, and permission was granted by Craufurd for the French to remove their wounded. That interval, honourable to the humanity of civilised warfare, was charitably employed on both sides; and French and English intermingled with perfect confidence and good humour, each seeking and taking off their wounded men, and occasionally offering a mutual assistance.

The contest at Busaco was never doubtful for a moment; but where it was hottest, there Lord Wellington was found. When not personally engaged in directing movements, he communicated, from time to time, to the generals of divisions such changes as he considered necessary for their guidance. The loss of life, as might have been expected

[1] Colonel Napier relates the following interesting anecdote:—"Meanwhile an affecting incident, contrasting strongly with the savage character of the preceding events, added to the interest of the day. A poor orphan Portuguese girl, about seventeen years of age, and very handsome, was seen coming down the mountain and driving an ass, loaded with all her property, through the midst of the French army. She had abandoned her dwelling in obedience to the proclamation; and now passed over the field of battle with a childish simplicity, totally unconscious of her perilous situation, and scarcely understanding which were the hostile and which the friendly troops, for no man on either side was so brutal as to molest her."

from the obstinacy with which the enemy continued gallant and unavailing efforts, was most severe, but the casualties of the French and allied armies relatively bore no proportion. The strength of his position, and his being enabled to employ artillery with terrible effect, gave to the British General an advantage of which he amply availed himself. Hence, of the enemy six thousand put *hors de combat* cannot be over the amount. Of this number, about three hundred, including General Simon, three colonels, and thirty-three inferior officers, were made prisoners; and nearly two thousand—for as the English buried the slain, they could form on this point a correct estimate—were left dead upon the battle-ground.

It was not, however, either in the physical loss or the abated pride which his victory inflicted upon Massena, that Wellington's advantages were comprised. The moral effect was far more important: Busaco, for the first time, brought the Portuguese troops into collision with the French, and under circumstances too that gave them at once a victory. "It may safely be affirmed that, owing to this success, on the day after the battle, the strength of the Portuguese troops was doubled. The sight of this auspicious change dispelled any desponding feeling from the British army. No presentiments of ultimate discomfiture were any longer entertained. The plan of defence which the far-seeing sagacity of their chief had formed, revealed itself to the meanest sentinel, and the troops of every nation prepared to follow the standard of their leader with that ready alacrity and undoubting confidence which is at once the forerunner and the cause of ultimate triumph."[1]

That Massena should persevere in advancing further into Portugal after the terrible lesson he had received on the Sierra of Busaco, was contrary to all military principles, and consequently induced Lord Wellington to believe that

[1] Alison's *History of Europe.*

the French Marshal would abandon the attempt and fall back to the Spanish frontier. But whether irritated at his defeat, or urged forward by his necessities, the French Marshal sought for and acquired information, which enabled him to turn the British position, and by the pass of Sardaô gain the Oporto road. His feint of a renewed attack upon the 28th failed, for the flank movement of his opponent did not for a single moment escape the eagle glance of Wellington. Instantly abandoning his mountain position, the British General took the direct route on Torres Vedras, through Coimbra and Leyria, enforcing by every means within his power the orders previously issued in his proclamation, which directed that the country should be wasted, and the towns deserted by their inhabitants, and left in desolate loneliness to the invaders.

The regressive movement of the allied army was a military spectacle which had never been previously exhibited, and nothing could be more imposing nor more strange. On the 1st of October it presented an extraordinary scene, "the varieties of which it is impossible minutely to describe; but when it is explained that the route was absolutely and continuously covered during its whole extent, some idea may be formed as to its unusual aspect. It was not alone troops of all arms, attended by the encumbrances or followers of an army; it was not peasantry, removing with their families; it was not the higher orders of society, travelling conformably to their rank; it was not the furniture, grain, cattle, of an extensive line of country, passing from one station to another; but it was all these combined, pressing forward in one varied, confused, apparently interminable mass."[1]

Everything considered, a retreat was never conducted in better order. The weather, until the infantry reached the lines, was good. At Coimbra, Condeixa, Redinha and

[1] Leith Hay.

Leyria, the troops became troublesome, until at the latter place the mischief was so much increased that "Lord Wellington arrested this growing disorder with a strong hand. Three men, taken in the fact at Leyria, were hanged on the spot; and some regiments, whose discipline was more tainted than others, were forbidden to enter a village."[1]

Ignorant respecting the strength of the position to which his opponent was retiring, and indifferent to the desperate resources on which he was about to entrust the existence of his army, the French Marshal accelerated his march. Before him were impregnable lines—around him an exhausted country. Misled by the ignorance of traitors—blinded by those fortunes which had raised a peasant of Nice into a prince of that empire, which for a time had left all others in the shade, Massena dared his fate; and, like his master, he found by sad experience, that fortune, when too often pressed, terminates invariably in disaster and disgrace.

On the evening of the 8th of October the advanced guards of the allies entered the lines, and on the 16th their posts were fully occupied, and now the secret labours of a year were about to recompense the skill and perseverance which, under every discouraging event, had brought an admirable commencement to a triumphant close.

The peninsula on which Lisbon stands is traversed by two lofty heights, that stretch from the Tagus to the ocean, varying in altitude and abruptness, and running in a parallel direction, at a distance of from six to nine miles. Through the passes in these mountains the four great roads that communicate between Lisbon and the interior run. The line on the Sierra next the capital is the stronger of the two. It commences at Ribamar, on the Rio Lorenzo, runs by Mafra, Cabeca de Montachique, and the

[1] Napier.

pass of Bucellas, and descends precipitously on the plain about an English league from the Tagus. This is the only weak point; and all that skill and labour could effect was exhausted to fortify every spot that nature had left open, and thus render Torres Vedras, its extent considered, the strongest position in Europe.

"In front of Via Longa, upon an eminence rising from the plain, at a short distance from the river, six redoubts were constructed, so situated, in consequence of the nearly circular formation of the plateau, as to command the approaches in every direction within the range of their artillery. Three of these immediately domineered the great route from Alhandra to Lisbon, to the right of which upon a knoll, in front of the town of Povoa, another work was formed, sweeping the communication in the direction of Quintella. On the bank of the Tagus, a redoubt, armed with four twelve-pounders, terminated the line at its eastern extremity. Fifty-nine redoubts, containing 232 pieces of cannon, estimated to require 17,500 men to garrison them, protected the weaker points, enfiladed the roads, or swept the ascent to the escarped mountains in the range of this extended position, occupying a front of twenty-two miles.

"The front line had been originally intended for one of isolated posts, rather than an unbroken extent of defensive ground, which it was subsequently made. It rests also on the Atlantic, at the mouth of the Zizandre; its weakest point being in the rear of the valley of Runa, where it stretches to Monte Agraça, and ample care was taken to correct this natural defect.

"On the Sierra, in the rear of Sobral, was constructed a redoubt of great magnitude, armed with twenty-five pieces of artillery, and prepared for a garrison of 1000 men. This formidable work, from its commanding and centrical situation, was the constant daily resort of Lord Wellington.

There he came every morning, and continued until it was ascertained that no hostile movement had taken place, and until light permitted a *reconnaissance* of the enemy's troops encamped opposite. From the redoubt on Monte Agraça, the line continued, crossing the valleys of Aruda and Calhandrix, until it rested on the Tagus at Alhandra."[1]

"Across the ravine on the left, a loose stone wall, sixteen feet thick and forty feet high, was raised; and across the great valley of Aruda, a double line of abatis was drawn—not composed, as is usual, of the limbs of trees, but of full-grown oaks and chestnuts, dug up with all their roots and branches, dragged by main force for several hundred yards, and then reset and crossed, so that no human strength could break through. Breast-works, at convenient distances, to defend this line of trees, were then cast up; and along the summits of the mountain, for a space of nearly three miles, including the salient points, other stone walls, six feet high and four in thickness, with banquettes,[2] were built; so that a good defence could have been made against the attacks of 20,000."[3]

Nature and art had rendered the ground from Calhandrix to the river particularly strong; but to make the defences still more formidable, and to form an intermediate obstruction, redoubts were thrown up extending to the rear, nearly at right angles with the front line. These swept the whole portion of the valley, by which a column of infantry must penetrate, even had it succeeded in forcing an entrance into the ravine. Sixty-nine works of different descriptions fortified this line; in these were mounted 319 pieces of artillery, requiring upwards of 18,000 men to garrison them; aud the extent, in a direct line from flank to flank, was twenty-five miles.

[1] Leith Hay.

[2] Banks or platforms, raised sufficiently high behind a work to enable its defenders to fire over the parapet.

[3] Napier.

In addition to the works thrown up in either line, or in the intervening points of communication, rivers were obstructed in their course, flooding the valleys, and rendering the country swampy and impassable; trenches were cut, from whence infantry, perfectly protected, might fire on the advancing columns of an enemy; these being also flanked by artillery, sweeping the approaches to them in every direction. Mountains were scarped; abatis, of the most formidable description, either closed the entrance to ravines, impeded an approach to the works, or blocked up roads, in which deep cuts were also marked out for excavation; routes, conducting from the front, were rendered impracticable; others within the lines either repaired or formed to facilitate communication, to admit the passage of artillery, or reduce the distance by which the troops had to move for the purposes of concentration or resistance; bridges were mined, and prepared for explosion; and telegraphs, erected at Alhandra, Monte Agraça, Socorra, Torres Vedras, and in the rear of Ponte de Rol, rapidly communicated information from one extremity of the line to the other. These signal stations were in charge of seamen from the fleet in the Tagus.

To complete the barriers, palisades, platforms, and planked bridges, leading into the works, 50,000 trees were placed at the disposal of the engineer department, during the three months, ending on the 7th of October, 1810. The cannon in the works were supplied by the Portuguese government. Cars, drawn by oxen, transported twelve-pounders where wheels had never previously rolled. Above 3000 officers and artillerymen of the country assisted in arming the redoubts, and were variously employed in the lines. At one period, exclusive of these, of the British engineers, artificers, or infantry soldiers, 7000 peasantry worked as labourers in the completion of an undertaking only to have been accomplished under the most favourable

circumstances, both with regard to cordiality of assistance, neighbouring arsenals, a British fleet in the Tagus, constant uninterrupted communication with a great capital, a regular remuneration to the labourers, an anxious and deep interest in the result to be accomplished by the assistance of the works in progress, and, above all, an intelligence and firmness in command that could at the same time extract the greatest benefits from these combinations, and urge exertion where it appeared to relax.

Ignorant of the matchless position of his adversary, the Prince of Essling pressed blindly on, but already his rival was beyond his grasp; while, in his rear, and on his flanks, a host of irregulars were swarming. In war daring does much, but prudence does more, and Massena's campaign points that moral well.

CHAPTER VII.

THE experience of a few days showed Massena how very desperate his chances were of deforcing an enemy who had been already tried on more assailable ground, and tried in vain. Before him rose the lines of Lisbon; behind, his communications with the Spanish frontier were cut off; Bacellar's army was spread over the country, and every post the Prince of Essling quitted was immediately occupied by Portuguese irregulars. In three days after he had established his hospitals in Coimbra, that city was surprised by Trant, and five thousand sick and wounded men, with the marine company that guarded them, were captured, and carried to Oporto. British gunboats filled the Tagus; supplies came freely to the allied camp; for the sea to them was open, and their intercourse with the capital was uninterrupted and direct. People flocked from Lisbon to visit the lines, in all that security which told the ruin of Napoleon's hopes; and with winter coming fast, an exhausted country to depend on, increasing sickness, disunited officers, and a disheartened soldiery, Massena felt his situation to be one, than which nothing could be more discouraging; for to attack were madness, to retreat disgraceful, and to remain impossible. Contrary, however, to every principle of war, the Marshal desperately persevered, and

for six weeks maintained sixty thousand men and twenty thousand horses in a country which could not have supplied a British brigade for a week.

Never did the circumstances of the times, nor the character of the army to which he was opposed, render, for the security of Lord Wellington, a stern obedience to the spirit of his proclamation so indispensable. It is true that the position of the allied army was everything but impregnable; but an unforeseen omission—an untoward event—one of those thousand accidents to which war is subject, might, when the gates of success were apparently completely closed, have opened them unexpectedly to a persevering enemy. The only chances of Massena depended on delay, and those who called themselves the allies of Wellington gave them to him. No soldiers in the world were better able to turn them to account; and never did the French army exhibit the singular capability of supporting itself when others would have perished, more strongly than Massena's before the lines of Lisbon. There indeed, the theory of their discipline was practically illustrated, and Napoleon's favourite principle carried out of making "war support war." The following graphic picture of their predatory superiority is thus given by an English historian:[1]—"Nothing escaped their search. The French soldiers had been so long accustomed to plunder that they proceeded in their researches for booty of every kind upon a regular system. They were provided with tools for the work of pillage, and every piece of furniture in which places of concealment could be constructed, they broke open from behind, so that no valuables could be hidden from them by any contrivance of that kind. Having satisfied themselves that nothing was secreted above ground, they proceeded to examine whether there was any new masonry, or if any part of the cellar or ground-floor had been disturbed: if it appeared uneven, they dug there; where there was no

[1] Dr. Southey.

such indication, they poured water, and if it were absorbed in one place faster than another, there they broke the earth. There were men, who, at the first glance, could pronounce whether anything had been buried beneath the soil; and when they probed with an iron rod, or, in default of it, with sword or bayonet, it was found that they were seldom mistaken in their judgment. The habit of living by prey called forth, as in beasts, a faculty of discovering it. There was one soldier whose scent became so acute that, if he approached the place where wine had been concealed, he would go unerringly to the spot."

The war had now assumed an unwonted character; and the question was not how to fight, but how to live. If the Prince of Essling could but obtain supplies, and remain in front of a position, which a careful reconnaissance convinced him that he could neither turn nor carry, some masterly diversion of Napoleon might still enable him to succeed; while Wellington, with admirable judgment, declined active measures, and trusted to starvation. Every hour his situation became more unpromising; for as the supplies grew scarcer, the difficulty to obtain them proportionately increased, and there was not a point on which Massena could move his foragers without encountering an enemy.

On the other hand, within the lines neither scarcity was felt nor danger apprehended. "Nor was Lord Wellington inattentive to the comforts and even luxuries of his followers. Provisions were abundant; there was no want of wine; and sports and amusements went on as if we had been, not at the seat of war, but in England. Officers of all ranks, and in every department, from the Commander-in-Chief down to the regimental subaltern, occasionally enjoyed the field-sports of hunting, shooting, and fishing. The men, too, had their pastimes, when not employed on duty. In a word, seldom has an army, occupying ground in the face of its enemy, enjoyed so many hours of relaxa-

tion, or contrived to unite so completely the pleasures of country life with the serious business of war. It is probably needless to add, that so great a show of security in their leader had the best possible effect upon the temper of the troops; or that the moral of the army was sustained, not more by a contemplation of things as they really were, than by a conviction that they must be going on prosperously, otherwise so much relaxation could not abound."[1]

At length the event which Lord Wellington had predicted was accomplished, and Massena, abandoning his position, retired from before the British lines. If, as all must admit, he had committed a serious error in making an imprudent advance, his retreat was worthy of his former reputation, and illustrated in a striking degree those military qualities which Napoleon affirmed that Massena so eminently possessed. His operations were effected with extraordinary secrecy, and they were so ably planned that they tended to encourage a belief that the Prince of Essling was preparing to resume the offensive, rather than to recede from the position he had so long and so uselessly blockaded.

In the belief that Massena intended to cross the Zezere by his bridges, and abandon Portugal altogether, Hill's corps was ordered across the Tagus, to move in that case on Abrantes, while Wellington himself, supposing that Santarem was merely occupied by a rear-guard, determined to force that position. This city stands upon a height which rises abruptly from the Tagus, and stretching about a league to the north, furnishes a steep and difficult position. On the 19th the allied General made all necessary arrangements to attack it. Fortunately, a part of the artillery had not arrived; and although the dispositions were in everything besides complete, he waited for the arrival of the guns. That pause was fortunate; and the eagle

[1] Lord Londonderry's Narrative.

glance of Wellington detected appearances that bespoke preparations for a determined stand. It was evident that the position would be obstinately maintained. "Every advantageous spot of ground was fully occupied; the most advanced sentinels boldly returned the fire of the skirmishers; large bodies of reserve were descried, some in arms, others cooking; the strokes of the hatchet, and the fall of trees, resounded from the woods clothing the hills; and the commencement of a triple line of abatis, and the fresh earth of entrenchments, were discernible in many places."[1]

Lord Wellington was convinced by the observations he made upon the following day, that the system he has himself pursued was now ably resorted to by his rival. Massena had the same advantages at Santarem that Wellington had possessed at Torres Vedras; and as flank movements were impracticable—the routes being so broken up during winter, as to render the manœuvring of heavy masses an impossibility—the British General determined to canton his troops, and patiently abide the issue.

To prevent any sudden outbreak from Santarem, the light division, supported by a cavalry brigade, were posted on the heights which overlook the marshes that surround the place; and the causeway—by which alone Massena could move troops forward—was secured by mining the bridge at its extremity, fortifying the hill that commanded it, and forming an entrenchment sufficient to contain a regiment. To the left of Vallé, a chain of posts extended by Malhorquija along a range of hills to Rio Mayor; Anson's cavalry watched the roads from Pernes and Alcanhede, and a division of infantry held an entrenched position at Alcoentre—thus effectually securing the approaches to the lines from Monte Junta to the Tagus.

Massena, in the meantime, had permanently fixed his headquarters at Torres Novas, fortified Punhete in his

[1] Napier.

rear, and thus secured his bridge upon the Zezere. His front was safe while the rains continued—a flooded country affording a sufficient protection. This position had every advantage, as his troops were well in hand, and on several points that of his opponent was vulnerable. He had also two lines open for retreating, by which, at the same time, he could communicate with the Spanish frontier, and cover the advance of any troops or supplies which might be forwarded from the rear.

Political considerations, added to a soldier's pride, were sufficient inducements to keep Massena in Portugal so long as he could subsist himself. While he held a position in the country, none could say that Lisbon was secure, or that Oporto was not open to aggression. The occupation of a portion of the kingdom increased the sufferings of a starving population, fostered discontent, encouraged disaffection, and gave reason to question the ultimate chances of British success. In England, the effect was still more powerful. The unfortunate malady of the king rendered the appointment of a regency unavoidable. An opposition, dangerous before, had thus obtained an accidental accession to their strength. The anti-war-cry was at its height; and if Ministers were obliged to yield to the political pressure at home the first act of their successors would be to retire from the contest altogether, which they had so often and so emphatically pronounced to be only a hopeless expenditure of blood and treasure. All these considerations, therefore, confirmed Massena's resolution to hold his present position to the last.

For some weeks the armies of Wellington and Massena continued quietly in each other's presence. Both Generals anxiously looked forward to a battle; it was an event which both desired; but as the positions of both were strong, the assailant must fight at disadvantage, and neither seemed inclined to throw a chance away.

The arrival at Lisbon of reinforcements, which contrary winds had long detained, induced Massena to believe that his opponent would now venture to attack. Rio Mayor, as the most vulnerable point, was the quarter from which danger might be expected; and, to satisfy himself that the allied divisions were not collecting at Alcoentre, the Duke of Abrantes made a reconnaissance on the 19th of January. With his characteristic intrepidity, Junot galloped into the place before the allied pickets had cleared the streets; and a German hussar, who was retiring, turned and wounded him dangerously with a carbine ball, the bullet lodging between the nose and cheekbone, and disabling the French Marshal for the remainder of the campaign.

On the 2d of February General Foy reached Massena's headquarters after a perilous and harassing journey, during which he had been incessantly exposed to the attacks of the Partidas. On one occasion he lost his despatches and half the escort; and in a night march across the mountains, three hundred of the detachment which accompanied him perished from cold and fatigue. His opportune arrival relieved Massena's uncertainty, and put him in full possession of the views and objects of the Emperor. Napoleon's commands were peremptory. The position then occupied by the French armies in Portugal must be maintained—Abrantes besieged—and while the ninth corps was added to the grand army, Massena was apprised that orders had been already despatched to Soult to move through the Alentejo, and assist in a series of concerted operations. It was further intimated that, should circumstances render it necessary, Andalusia would be abandoned, to enable the army of Portugal to hold their ground on the southern banks of the Tagus, and finally effect the great object of the Emperor, by driving Lord Wellington to his ships.

Repeated orders to the above effect had been transmitted from Napoleon to the Duke of Dalmatia, but the despatches

had been intercepted by the guerillas, and it was therefore late in December before Soult was acquainted with the wishes of the Emperor. The Marshal lost no time in carrying them into effect; and having drafted four thousand infantry from the first corps, he marched with the cavalry of Latour Maubourg to Seville. To secure that city in his absence, he intrusted the command to General Daricau, and entrenched it on the side of Niebla; and having posted Godinot at Cordova, Digeon at Ecija, and Remond at Gibraleon, Soult immediately put his *corps d'armée* in motion. His force amounted to 20,000 men, of whom 4000 were cavalry, with fifty pieces of field artillery, a siege and pontoon train, and an enormous number of country carts, for the transport of ammunition and stores. Victor in the meantime was intrusted with the blockade of Cadiz and the protection of the French lines.

The promptitude with which the Duke of Dalmatia proceeded to effect the orders of the Emperor embarrassed the Spanish generals, who, with their customary military ignorance, were unable to penetrate the real objects of the expedition, and supposed that the French Marshal was about to march by Truxillo on Almarez. Lord Wellington, however, in sufficient time undeceived Mendizabal, whom he had previously exhorted to concentrate his troops, dismantle Olivença, and secure the passage of the Guadiana by the destruction of the bridges.

On the 6th the advanced cavalry carried the bridge at Merida; and Soult, having secured the passage of his artillery and stores, and driven the Partidas from the banks of the Tagus, marched against the town of Olivença, into which place Mendizabal, in opposition to the remonstrances of Lord Wellington, had thrown four thousand of his best soldiers. Olivença was of no importance in itself; was weakly armed, had a breach but imperfectly repaired, and was neither worthy nor capable of being defended.

Although Soult had completed the investment on the 11th, the weather was so severe that the covered way was not crowned until the 19th, and on the 20th his batteries commenced breaching. Manual Herk, the Spanish governor, was duly apprised that Romana had sent two divisions to his assistance, and he assured Mendizabal that he had ample means to warrant him in holding out, and consequently that he would defend the fortress to the last; but, on the following morning, the first salvo from the French battery was the signal for an unconditional surrender. By this misfortune a large supply of provisions fell into the hands of the enemy—and Soult obtained twenty pieces of artillery, and four thousand effective men.

The fall of Olivença was but a portion of the success that attended the operations of the French Marshal. Ballasteros was overtaken and brought to action by Gazan's division, on the 28th, at Castallejoz, and defeated with the loss of one thousand men. The beaten army crossed the Guadiana in great confusion, and thus, in the brief space of three weeks, a fortress had been reduced and two corps defeated and dispersed, after sustaining the loss of twelve thousand of their best soldiers.

While Soult's expedition into Estremadura was thus far attended by the most brilliant success, the French influence in Andalusia had been seriously endangered in his absence. It was strange with what indifference the population in the south of Spain had witnessed the progress of the war; and their unaccountable apathy formed a striking contrast to the fierce and active opposition offered to the invading armies in every province besides.

At Cadiz it was not to be expected that a force numerically superior to that which held them in duresse would continue long inactive; and Victor, with an investing line of twenty-five miles in length, and hardly twenty thousand men to hold it, distributed his reduced force with excellent

judgment, and made every preparation to repel the attempts, which, in Soult's absence, would probably be made by the Anglo-Spanish army, to force his position and raise the siege of Cadiz.

The allied troops who formed the garrison of the city were commanded by their respective officers; the British by Lieutenant-General Graham, the Spaniards by Don Manuel de Lapena. When a plan of operations was finally arranged, the English General waived his right to command, and consented to act under the orders of a man, who, subsequently, proved himself totally unworthy of the honour which a brave and able officer had thus conceded.

The plan adopted by the Anglo-Saxon generals was to embark their united forces, sail from Cadiz to Tarifa, land and counter-march for sixty miles, carry the intermediate posts at Vejer and Casa Vieja, and, assisted by a corps under General Zayas, fall, as they hoped, by surprise, on Victor's camp at Chiclana, and drive him from his lines. While Zayas, for the passage of his division, should throw a bridge over the Santi Petri, near the sea, the Partidas were to menace Sebastiani, and Ballasteros, with the remnant of his corps, threaten Seville, and thus occupy the attention of the enemy, and prevent any union between Victor and the French detachments in the higher provinces and Grenada.

The embarkation could not be effected within sight of the enemy's works, without convincing the French Marshal that an attempt to raise the siege was contemplated, but where or how it would be made, it was impossible to foresee, and he therefore determined to remain on the alert, until the movements of the allies should disclose the true object of their operations. Leaving a sufficient garrison in his principal works, Victor collected the flower of his army near Chiclana; and with eleven thousand chosen troops in

hand, he took a convenient position between the great roads of Corril and Medina.

A gale of wind prevented the allies from landing at Tarifa, and drove them to Algesiras, where they disembarked. Lapena here assumed the command, and commenced a long and most fatiguing march, with a force of all arms, amounting to 14,000 men, of whom about 4200 were British troops. After moving at first towards Medina Sidonia, and thus imposing on his army a wearying and unnecessary detour, he changed his line of march; and at noon of the 5th, reached the Cerro de Puerco, a low undulating ridge, better known in Peninsular history as the Heights of Barrosa.

On reaching Barrosa, Lapena found that Zayas had been attacked by Victor; and though he still held the bridge he had thrown over the Santi Petri, his communications with the Isla de Leon were seriously endangered. The Spanish General, in consequence, pushed forward his vanguard, under Lardizable, and, after a sharp affair, the latter effected a junction with Zayas; and thus the whole of the allied force was safely posted on the left flank of Victor's lines.

But Lapena could not estimate his advantage. His sole anxiety appeared to turn upon holding his communication safe with Cadiz; and while his rear, entirely separated from the centre, was still straggling over the country; and contrary to the expressed wishes of Graham, who implored him to hold Barrosa, he declined his advice, and ordered the British to march through the pine wood on Bermeja. Graham, supposing that Anglona's division and the cavalry would continue to occupy the hill, leaving the flank companies of the 9th and 82d to protect his baggage, obeyed the order and commenced his march. But the astonishment of the English General was unbounded, when, on entering the wood, he saw Lapena moving his entire corps from the

heights of Barrosa, with the exception of three or four battalions and as many pieces of artillery.

Unfortunately, the English General was not the only person who had observed that Barrosa was abandoned. Victor, concealed in the forest of Chiclana, anxiously watched the movements of the allies. He saw the fatal error committed by the Spanish leader, and instantly made dispositions to profit from the ignorance and obstinacy of his antagonist.

Keeping three grenadier battalions in reserve, Victor sent orders to Latour Maubourg's cavalry to move rapidly on Vejer, while with the whole of his disposable force he rushed forward to seize the height which his opponent had so unwisely abandoned. Ruffin commanded the left, Laval the centre, and Villatte the reserve. Pivoting upon the latter, Laval's division moved to meet the British, while Ruffin, ascending the reverse of the hill, interposed between the Spaniards and Medina, dispersed the camp-followers in an instant, and captured the guns and baggage.

A crowd of fugitives apprised the English General that the heights were already won, the enemy in his rear—the French cavalry between him and the sea—and Laval's brigade moving in rapid march to fall on his left flank.

It was indeed a most perilous situation—and in that extremity, the brave old man to whom the British had been fortunately confided, proved himself worthy of the trust. He saw the ruin of retreat,—safety lay in daring—and though the enemy held the key of the position with fresh troops, Graham boldly determined to attack them with his wearied ones.

Wheeling right about, with their rear ranks in front, the British regiments issued from the wood, and pressing boldly up the hill, the battle was instantly commenced. Duncan's artillery opened a furious cannonade on the column of Laval; and Colonel Barnard, with the rifles and

Portuguese caçadores, extended to the left and began firing. The rest of the British troops formed two masses, without regard to regiments or brigades; one, under General Dilkes, marched direct against Ruffin, and the other, under Colonel Whately, boldly attacked Laval. On both sides the guns poured a torrent of grape and canister over the field; the infantry kept up a withering fire; and both sides advanced, for both seemed anxious to bring the contest to an issue. Whately, when the lines approached, came forward to the charge, drove the first line upon the second, and routed both with slaughter.

Dilkes's attack upon Ruffin's brigade had been equally bold, and obtained a similar success. Although the French held the crest of the hill, breathless, disorganised, but with a desperate resolution that seemed to hold ordinary disadvantages at defiance, Colonel Brown pressed up the ridge. Half of his detachment went down under the enemy's first fire; yet he maintained the fight, until Dilkes's column, which had crossed a deep hollow, and never stopped even to re-form the regiments, came up, with little order indeed, but in a fierce mood, when the whole ran up towards the summit; there was no slackness on any side, and at the very edge of the ascent, their gallant opponents met them. A dreadful, and for some time a doubtful, fight ensued; but Ruffin and Chaudron Rousseau, commanding the chosen grenadiers, both fell, mortally wounded. The English bore strongly onward; and their incessant slaughtering fire forced the French from the hill, with the loss of three guns and many brave soldiers.

Still the routed brigades, though heavily repulsed, exhibited an undaunted spirit worthy of their former fame, and made a brave but bootless effort to renew the fight, and restore the fortune of the day. Retiring by concentric lines, they attempted to rally at the point where their disordered masses united, and arrest the farther advance of

the British regiments. The British artillery, however, rendered every exertion to recover their formation unavailing; the fire of the guns was rapid, close, and murderous, the shattered brigades yielded to its violence, and the handful of cavalry charged furiously, and completed the victory.

The exhausted state of the British troops had made any attempt at a pursuit impossible; and a position was taken "on the eastern side of the hill" by the conquerors, while the Spanish regiments, although too late to share in the arduous struggle which was already ended, secured the right of the British line.

Two thousand of Victor's corps were put *hors de combat* in the action; and an eagle, with six pieces of artillery, and four hundred and thirty-eight prisoners, remained in possession of the British. Never were the trophies of a victory more dearly won. More than one-fourth of the whole force of Graham were either killed or wounded; for without losing a prisoner, the English casualties, in killed and wounded, amounted to one thousand two hundred and forty-two.

A vote of thanks to General Graham and his gallant army passed both Houses of the British Parliament without a dissentient voice.

On Feb. 26th, Soult proceeded to invest Badajoz. Mendizabal was already in the fortress; and with a strong position under the walls, and ten thousand men exclusive of the garrison, with common discretion, he might have been considered in perfect security. He was protected by three fortresses; while the Guadiana and the Gevora covering his front, his right rested on fort St. Christoval; Elvas was in the rear of his centre, Campo Mayor behind his left; and Lord Wellington, in an able and lucid memorandum, had amply detailed the means by which he could, and with perfect safety to himself, prevent the French Marshal from investing Badajoz at all.

Mendizabal, leaving the fortress in charge of the governor, Rafael Menacho, formed an encampment round Fort St. Christoval; but being inconvenienced by a fire of the French mortars, he fell back behind the Gevora, merely contenting himself with destroying the bridge. Perceiving, from a false security, that his opponent had neglected to entrench himself, the French Marshal determined to surprise the Spanish camp; and accordingly he made prompt and able dispositions to effect it.

On the evening of March 18th, the floods had sufficiently abated to permit his infantry and artillery to ford the Guadiana, four miles above its confluence with the Gevora, while a strong cavalry division was moved down from Montijo. At daybreak of the 19th, he succeeded, with equal ease, in crossing the Gevora by fords on either side of the bridge which Mendizabal had destroyed. A thick mist concealed his operations effectually; and 5000 infantry and 2000 cavalry were passed over a river in front of 15,000 Spaniards, and not a shot disturbed them. At eight o'clock the fog cleared away; "and the first beams of the sun, and the certainty of victory, flashed together on the French soldiers; for the horsemen were already surrounding the Spanish left; and in the centre, infantry, cavalry, and guns, heaped together, were waving to and fro in disorder; while the right, having fallen away from San Christoval, was totally unsupported."[1] The result may be readily conceived: by ten o'clock the Spanish army was almost annihilated; eight thousand prisoners, the entire of the artillery colours, baggage, and ammunition, were taken, while with difficulty two thousand of the routed troops reached Campo Mayor, and as many more found shelter in Badajoz and Elvas. Virues was made prisoner, and Mendizabal and Carrera saved themselves by an early and ignominious flight.

[1] Napier.

Notwithstanding that the victory on the Gevora had placed the Spanish army *hors de combat*, still the eventual success of the Duke of Dalmatia was dependent on many and very doubtful contingencies. His operations had involved a loss which his limited numbers were ill-adapted to sustain. The weather continued wet and stormy; and consequently his convoys were brought forward with great labour, and his foragers were necessarily spread over an extent of country, which weakened a corps already reduced by two thousand casualties, and exhausted the spirits and the strength of the soldiery. Lord Wellington was not likely to permit a fortress, to which he attached so much importance, to fall without making a vigorous effort for its relief. The floods which had forced the French Marshal to raise the investment, enabled the inhabitants to quit the city, and leave ample supplies behind them for the subsistence of the garrison. The place was strong—the governor determined to maintain it—and the victory which had destroyed the Spanish army on the heights of San Christoval increased the defenders of Badajoz to nine thousand effective men. Under such circumstances, Soult boldly sat down before a place whose subsequent sieges obtained for it a sanguinary and glorious celebrity.

Badajoz is situated on the left bank of the Guadiana; which river is from three to five hundred yards broad, and washes one-fourth of the enceinte, rendering it nearly unattackable. The defences along the river are confined to a simple and badly flanked rampart, with an exposed revêtement, but on the other sides consist of eight spacious and well-built regular fronts, having a good counter-scarp, covered-way, and glacis, but the ravelins incomplete. The scarp of the bastions exceeds thirty feet in height, and that of the curtains varies from twenty-three to twenty-six feet. In advance of these fronts are two detached works: one called the Bardaleras, at two hundred yards distance, is a

crown work; its escarps are low, its ditches narrow, and its rear badly closed: the other, called the Picurina, is a strong redoubt, four hundred yards in advance of the town. On the north-east of the town, at the angle formed by the junction of the river Rivillas with the Guadiana, rises a hill to the height of more than one hundred feet, the summit of which is crowned by an old castle; and its walls, naked, weak, and but partially flanked, here form part of the enceinte of the place.[1]

After the destruction of Mendizabal's army, the French had pressed the siege of Badajoz with vigour, completed their second parallel, and carrying the sap to the covered way, their miners made preparations to blow down the counterscarp. Rafael Menacho, however, retrenched the streets; and as the fire of the place was superior to that of the French batteries, and the besiegers were annoyed by constant sallies of the garrison, Mortier was under serious apprehensions that his efforts to reduce the fortress would prove fruitless. Unfortunately, while personally directing a sortie to prevent the covered way from being crowned, the brave old Governor was killed by a cannon shot, and the command devolved upon a man on whom it afterwards conferred an infamous celebrity.

Jose de Imaz had served under Romana in the north of Europe, and had been subsequently employed with the Spanish armies; and he now assumed the command of Badajoz under every encouragement. Of provisions and ammunition he had an ample supply, and his garrison comprised 8500 effective men. The besiegers were sadly reduced by sickness and fatigue—the breach was impracticable, and the telegraph at Elvas informed him that Massena was in full retreat, and Wellington advancing to raise the siege,—an assurance confirmed by a private letter,

[1] Jones's *Journal of the Sieges.*

which a confidential messenger succeeded in delivering. "Imaz read the letter, and instantly surrendered, handing over, at the same moment, the intelligence thus obtained to the enemy."

But national pride required that some honourable token of respect should be offered by the enemy as an attestation of his bravery; and Imaz demanded and obtained permission that his grenadiers should defile through the breach. Alas! that *fête* was more difficult than he had imagined; the fracture in the escarpe was found too small, and Imaz was obliged to enlarge the opening himself. Not a French soldier would assist; they all stood looking on in silent contempt, while, with Spanish stateliness, and in all the pomp of full-blown ignominy, the Governor of Badajoz marched out 8000 men in the presence of a besieging force which did not much exceed the number of his own garrison!

Was this base traitor shot or hanged? He was neither. To the indignant remonstrances of Lord Wellington the Spanish Government tardily responded, and proceedings were instituted to bring Imaz to justice; but in tedious formalities they surpassed even those of an English Court of Equity, and they consequently outlived the war!

With the fall of Badajoz, Soult's expedition terminated. The reverses experienced in Andalusia demanded his immediate presence (General Graham had gained a bloody but glorious victory over Marshal Victor on the heights of Barrosa); and leaving Mortier to reduce Campo Mayor, after an unexampled success with means so comparatively small, the French Marshal returned to resume the siege of Cadiz. Never was a campaign more splendid or more rapid. Within two months, the Duke of Dalmatia had taken more prisoners than exceeded the effective strength of his whole corps when he marched from Seville to commence his operations. He had placed 10,000 more *hors*

de combat, reduced four fortresses, and obtained the mastery in Estremadura. "Yet, great and daring and successful as his operations had been, the principal object of his expedition was frustrated, for Massena was in retreat, and Lord Wellington's combinations had palsied the hand of the conqueror."[1]

[1] Napier.

CHAPTER VIII.

WHILE these events were progressing in Andalusia and Estremadura, Massena commenced a retreat, as admirable in a military point of view as it was execrable in a moral one. In his present position the French Marshal had no longer the means of remaining. "Sickness wasted the army, food became daily scarcer, the organisation of the troops was seriously lessened, the leading generals were at variance, and the conspiracy to put St. Cyr at the head of the army in Spain was by no means relinquished."[1] Aware that large reinforcements were expected by Lord Wellington, Massena appeared to await their arrival in the Tagus as his signal to retire. The transports, after a six weeks' passage, landed on the 2d of March, and the Prince of Essling having been apprised by a secret agent of the circumstance, broke up from Santarem on the night of the 5th, and on the following morning the British troops were put in motion for the pursuit.

The French Marshal had four lines open by which he might retreat; but that through the valley of the Mondego was the one which he determined to adopt. Accordingly, his march was directed upon Coimbra and Oporto, and it

[1] Napier.

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lay through a country as yet unexhausted, and therefore capable of affording supplies for his army on the route.

Circumstances favoured the French retreat. Rain fell in torrents—the rivers rose with the rapidity so common in a hilly country; and the villanous misconduct of the Portuguese Government, at this trying moment, was painfully displayed. Massena's retreating army was now amply provisioned; and the advancing columns of the allies were actually threatened with starvation. For the Portuguese troops no means of subsistence had been provided by their own executive,—from actual inanition they were unable to get on,—and but for the assistance rendered by the British commissariat, they must have actually perished from mere hunger. No language can describe the shameful misconduct of the regency. The most flimsy pretexts were made apologies for the most iniquitous neglect. To the wants of their own soldiers, as well as to those of their allies, they were equally indifferent,—a scarcity of fuel in a country abounding in wood was a plea for the starvation of the one,—and when reinforcements landed in the Tagus, they were left in the streets of Lisbon without a meal, or even a bed to rest upon.

The military skill displayed by the allied general during his advance in pursuit of Massena, proved him to be a master of the art of war. Never had a retreating army a more favourable country for its operations; and never was any permitted to avail itself so little of these advantages. Although every league he crossed offered to the Prince of Essling some position of matchless strength, it was seldom more than occupied, when some beautiful movement of Lord Wellington turned a flank, and caused its immediate abandonment,—science thus effecting without the expenditure of a cartridge what with a less intelligent commander would have required an enormous sacrifice of life.

While these splendid operations of Lord Wellington

established his military superiority over him surnamed by Napoleon *l'enfant gâté de la victoire*, the results of his successes were of paramount value in a moral point of view. Coimbra and the Upper Beira were saved; and a great city and valuable district thus escaped the fearful visitation of a relentless enemy, whose ravages had "sent fear before, and left ruin behind their track."

It is a painful task, even at this distant day, to recall to memory the frightful atrocities which stamped an undying infamy on the retreat of the French army out of Portugal; and the detail of the barbarities they perpetrated would now be considered too horrible for credence, were they not faithfully established by the evidence of those who were actual eye-witnesses. Colonel Napier relates the following revolting story of human suffering:—

"This day's march disclosed a horrible calamity. A large house, situated in an obscure part of the mountains, was discovered, filled with starving persons. Above thirty women and children had sunk, and, sitting by the bodies, were fifteen or sixteen survivors, of whom only one was a man, but all so enfeebled as to be unable to eat the little food we had to offer them. The youngest had fallen first; all the children were dead; none were emaciated in the bodies, but the muscles of the face were invariably drawn transversely, giving the appearance of laughing, and presenting the most ghastly sight imaginable. The man seemed most eager for life; the women appeared patient and resigned, and even in their distress had arranged the bodies of those who first died with decency and care."

Again he says—"Every horror that could make war hideous attended this dreadful march! Distress, conflagrations, death in all modes—from wounds, from fatigue, from water, from the flames, from starvation! On every side unlimited violence, unlimited vengeance! I myself saw a peasant hounding on his dog to devour the dead and

dying; and the spirit of cruelty once unchained smote even the brute creation. On the 15th the French General, to diminish the encumbrances of his march, ordered a number of beasts of burthen to be destroyed; the inhuman fellow charged with the execution, hamstringed 500 asses and left them to starve, and thus they were found by the British army on that day. The mute but deep expression of pain and grief visible in these poor creatures' looks, wonderfully roused the fury of the soldiers; and so little weight has reason with the multitude, when opposed by a momentary sensation, that no quarter would have been given to any prisoner at that moment."

Had not the British light troops already signalised themselves during the retreat, the conduct of the splendid battalions at Sabugal alone was sufficient to immortalise the division. Hurried prematurely into action through the rashness of their commanding officer—embarrassed by mist and rain, which prevented them from perceiving danger, until the skirmishers and 43d were involved in a contest with the whole of Reynier's corps, and that, too, when not a division of the English army had reached its appointed battle-ground—in this desperate situation, the beautiful discipline and chivalrous courage of these gallant soldiers kept the multitude of their assailants in check, until the 52d arrived to their assistance. A brilliant charge cleared the heights; the French were forced back, and a howitzer was captured. The advance of the light regiments, however, was arrested by the enemy's cavalry, and the skirmishers quickly driven back upon the battalion companies of the 43d, which had sheltered themselves behind a stone enclosure. The French horsemen swarmed in squadrons over the hill; and some, more daring than the rest, surmounted the ascent, and, "with incredible desperation, riding up to the wall, were in the act of firing over it with their pistols, when a rolling volley laid nearly the whole

of them lifeless on the ground. By this time, however, a second and stronger column of infantry had rushed up the face of the hill, endeavouring to break in and retake the howitzer, which was on the edge of the descent and only fifty yards from the wall; but no man could reach it and live, so deadly was the 43d's fire."[1]

To the gallantry of the troops Lord Wellington bore ample testimony; and not only in his official details, but also in his private correspondence, he alludes with manifest satisfaction to the noble conduct of his light troops. "We have given," he says, "the French a handsome dressing, and I think they will not say again that we are not a manœuvring army. We may not manœuvre so beautifully as they do; but I do not desire better sport than to meet one of their columns *en masse* with our lines. The poor 2d corps received a terrible beating from the 43d and 52d on the 3d."

After his defeat, Reynier fell back on Rendo. The French loss was exceedingly heavy—as the minimum has been laid at 1000, while others raise it to one-half more. This trial of strength seemed to have decided Massena upon abandoning Portugal altogether. On April 4th his march was rapidly directed on Ciudad Rodrigo; and on the 5th the French rear guard crossed the frontier, and left the land they had invaded without an enemy!

The discomfiture of the army of Portugal was in every way decisive; and Massena's campaign conveyed two useful lessons. Regarding the qualities of the British army, the continental belief was very general, that with much active courage and matchless endurance, they had neither talents for manœuvring, nor, had they possessed them, were their generals sufficient tacticians to turn them to account. This error, by Lord Wellington's recent operations, was removed. When he acted on the defensive, at every place

[1] Napier.

where he awaited an attack, his positions were so ably chosen, that the French were always obliged to fight at disadvantage. When it was his interest to advance, half the objects at which he aimed were effected by previous combinations, and sometimes without losing a man.

When Massena reached the Agueda, his army did not exceed 35,000 effective men. He invaded Portugal with 65,000; at Santarem, Count d'Erlon joined him with 10,000 more; and 9000 reinforced him during his retreat; consequently, the losses sustained during the campaign amounted in round numbers to 40,000 men, of whom at least two-thirds were veteran soldiers.

Although the junction of convalescents and detachments in a few days increased the strength of his *corps d'armée* to 40,000 troops of all arms, Massena did not consider himself in a state that warranted him in recommencing active operations. His troops required a season for repose; they had been not only numerically, but physically reduced, their energies exhausted by fatigue, and their spirit broken by a constant succession of defeats. These considerations determined the Prince of Essling to avoid hostilities for the present, and accordingly, he retired to Salamanca. In consequence of this movement of the French Marshal, Lord Wellington, cantoning his army between the Coa and Agueda, invested Almeida, while Beresford, with a corps increased by the fourth division and a brigade of heavy cavalry to 22,000 men, was detached to relieve Campo Mayor, and commence the siege of Badajoz. The former place surrendered on the 21st, when Beresford had reached Chamusca, and his advanced guards were only two marches distant from the fortress.

Having obtained possession of Campo Mayor, Marshal Beresford cantoned his troops in Elvas and the villages in its vicinity. The army required rest,—their recent duties had been severe,—and the fourth division in particular

had suffered much from fatigue, a scarcity of shoes having obliged them to march barefooted. At Elvas the Marshal had been assured by the Portuguese authorities that he should find the necessary *matériel* for throwing a bridge across the Guadiana—a preliminary step towards the investment of Badajoz. But the amount of the means for effecting this work was found to be miserably insufficient. Instead of twenty large boats, which it was alleged had been brought from Badajoz before the siege, but five were found; and the pontoons sent up from Lisbon were so small that they neither were calculated to withstand the rapidity of the current nor bear the weight of artillery. By this delay, General Philippon, the Governor of Badajoz, was enabled to restore the defences and fill in the trenches; while Latour Maubourg, who had succeeded Mortier in the command, with his accustomed activity spread his foragers over the country in all directions, and thus obtained a sufficiency of provisions to enable the fortress to withstand a siege.

On the 21st Lord Wellington himself arrived at Elvas from the north, and there Marshal Beresford joined him. On the following day a formal *reconnaissance* was made on Badajoz. With the Germans and cavalry division of Madden, Lord Wellington forded the Guadiana, and approached close to the fortress. The incidental arrival of a convoy, under protection of infantry and cavalry, induced the escort of Lord Wellington to attempt to cut it off, and obliged Philippon to make a sortie to protect its entrance. A smart affair ensued that caused the allies the loss of 100 men, and enabled the convoy to reach its destination.

Everything led Lord Wellington to conclude that Soult would not permit Badajoz to fall without making a vigorous effort to save it. But hardly had he come to this conclusion when intelligence arrived that Massena was about to take the field. Napoleon's orders to that effect were imperative; and Wellington hurried back to the Agueda,

leaving with Marshal Beresford instructions by which he was in every case to be directed.

When Lord Wellington arrived at Villa Fermosa on the 28th of April, he found that the French army were concentrating fast at Ciudad Rodrigo, where Massena had been stationary since the 25th. The object of the Marshal was no secret; and his superiority in point of strength had been clearly ascertained. For Lord Wellington there was no alternative, and he must either permit Almeida to be relieved or risk a battle. Upon the latter he decided; and with 32,000 infantry, 1500 cavalry, and 42 guns, he united his detached corps, and took a position that covered the blockaded fortress.

The allied battle position was on a table-land—the centre in front of Almeida, the left flank resting on Fort Conception, and the right in the village of Fuentes d'Oñoro. This lovely village had been alternately possessed by the allies and the enemy; and by a very singular good fortune it had been hitherto respected by both. It stands in a valley on the left bank of the Dos Casas, with rising grounds on either side. The road to Ciudad Rodrigo passes through the hamlet, and a morass extends on that side, until it is bounded by a thick wood; while, on the other, the ground undulates considerably, and the surface is rocky and uneven. There were many stone enclosures in Fuentes, which would yield good protection to the infantry that might be engaged in its defence; and the heights behind afforded a rallying point for troops if forced from the lower village, and also a means of feeding them with reinforcements from the divisions posted in their rear. The upper part of the village stands upon the edge of a ravine which rises boldly from the channel of the Don Casas; and the old chapel and a few houses which crowned the height were, from a situation of difficult approach, particularly defensible. Upon this sweet village the first and final efforts of the enemy were made.

In the glorious contest that ensued, Wellington never fought under more serious disadvantages. In every arm of war he was weaker than his antagonist,—in cavalry immeasurably inferior,—and Massena's cuirassiers alone should have ensured a victory. Notwithstanding that its grand outline presented a fine battle ground, the allied position was particularly dangerous. With the Coa in his rear, Wellington had but one point by which artillery could pass the river; and the narrow bridge at Castello Bom was ill suited for a rapid retreat had any disaster obliged him to withdraw a beaten army. To turn his opponent's right, seize his only communication with the left bank of the river, and, once lodged upon the table-land, overwhelm the allies with heavy masses, supported by the charges of a splendid cavalry, was evidently Massena's design; and Loison, consequently, not waiting for his arrival, endeavoured to assist the Prince of Essling's intended operation, by seizing the strong village on which the left of the allies was appuied.

The assault on Fuentes d'Oñoro was furiously made, and it was as fiercely repelled. Oppressed by a heavy cannonade, the lower village was gradually abandoned to the enemy, but the chapel and craggy eminence were desperately maintained. Loison redoubled his efforts; Wellington reinforced his hard-pressed battalions; and when night fell, the lower houses of Fuentes remained in possession of the French, and the upper village was occupied by British regiments.

The *reconnaissance* of the next day confirmed Massena in his first intention of storming the opposite flank of the position, and gaining the plateau, which stretched away from the rugged banks of the Dos Casas. Julian Sanchez, after a short contest, was driven across the Turon, the village of Poco Velho was carried, and Montbrun poured his heavy squadrons over the level summit of the height. After a noble but unavailing resistance, the allied cavalry were forced to retire, and seek protection from the infantry. The

French horsemen instantly galloped forward. They found the light infantry in squares, and unassailable; but as the 7th division had not effected that formation, many were cut down in line, and a troop of horse artillery completely surrounded. With other troops a certain defeat must have ensued; but at this fearful moment their own gallantry and discipline saved the British soldiers. Although surprised by the sudden rush of the cuirassiers, the chasseurs Britanniques threw themselves behind a broken fence, and maintaining a rolling fire that fell upon the assailants with murderous effect, they checked the onward career of the enemy. At one place, however, the fury of the fight seemed for a time to centre. "A great commotion was observed among the French squadrons; men and officers closed in confusion towards one point where a thick dust was rising, and where loud cries and the sparkling of blades and flashing of pistols indicated some extraordinary occurrence. Suddenly the multitude was violently agitated, an English shout arose, the mass was rent asunder, and Norman Ramsay burst forth at the head of his battery, his horses breathing fire, and stretching like greyhounds along the plain, his guns bounding like things of no weight, and the mounted gunners in close and compact order protecting the rear."[1]

At this period of the day, while isolated displays of gallantry might for a time have checked the progress of the French, still the final issue of the contest seemed fraught with danger to the British General. Wellington's right was turned—his division separated—a murderous combat raging on his left in Fuentes; and to secure success, it was imperative that his outflanked wing should be instantly thrown back, and his communications with the bridge of Sabugal abandoned. "Looking with just confidence rather to victory than to any likelihood of retreating, he drew in the right of his army, sending the 7th division over the Turon to Frenada,

[1] Napier.

on its left bank." The light division, covered by the cavalry, retired over the plain, and the 1st, 3d, and Portuguese formed nearly at right angles with their first position, now resting their battalions upon the height which ran perpendicularly with Fuentes, their left being still pivoted on that village.

To effect this delicate change of formation was indeed a perilous essay, one which a master-spirit only dare adopt, and one which might be intrusted alone to British soldiers. To retire troops across a level plain, the outer flank having a surface of four miles to traverse, surrounded by heavy masses of French cavalry, flushed with the full assurance of approaching victory, and waiting a false movement to fall on, was certainly a daring resolution. Far as the eye could range, the plateau was crowded with camp-followers and equipage. These fugitives added to the confusion, and consequently increased the risks; "and if any of the divisions had given way, the enemy would have burst in upon them with such force as would have sent the disorderly multitude headlong against some of its own squares, and thrown the whole into irreparable confusion."[1]

"But in that dread hour, perhaps the most perilous of the whole war for England, she was saved by the skill of her chief and the incomparable valour of her soldiers. Slowly, and in perfect order, the squares of the 1st, 7th, and light divisions retired for many miles, flanked on either side by the terrible cuirassiers of Montbrun, flushed with the newly won glories of Wagram; pressed in rear by the columns and batteries of Ney's corps, which had broken the Russian army at Friedland. In vain their thundering squadrons swept round these serried bands, and the light of the British bayonets was, for a time, lost in the blaze of the French cuirasses; from every throng the unbroken squares still emerged, pursuing their steady way amidst a terrific fire;

[1] Napier.

the 7th division successfully accomplished its long semi-circular sweep, crossed the Turon, and took up its ground between that stream and the Coa; the centre of the army soon gained the ridge of heights for which it was destined; while the left, with invincible firmness, still made good the crags and chapel of Fuentes d'Oñoro. When the whole had taken up their ground, Massena recoiled from the prospect of attacking such an enemy as he had now combated, posted in dense masses on a ridge not two miles in length, and covered on either flank by a steep ravine; and, confining himself to a cannonade along its front, redoubled his efforts on the left, where he sent the whole division of Drouet against the village of Fuentes d'Oñoro."[1]

The attack was made with all that reckless desperation which indicated that on success or failure the fortunes of a doubtful day were staked. Every arm was used—cavalry appeared waiting an opportunity to act—infantry burst into the lower village in heavy masses—and while the French artillery poured a storm of shot upon the houses and enclosures, the enemy advanced with imposing steadiness, although their passage led through a street choked with the dead and dying, who had already perished in vain but reiterated attempts. The British regiments, far overmatched in numbers, were gradually forced back upon the heights and chapel, after sustaining a heavy loss, two companies of the 79th having been taken, and Colonel Cameron slain. But beyond the upper village no effort of the enemy could drive its gallant defenders. In vain the French were frequently and strongly reinforced, until the entire of the 6th and a part of Count d'Erlon's corps were engaged. Lord Wellington, in turn, sent in his reserves, and the assault and defence were on both sides obstinately continued, the fortune of the day alternating as fresh combatants took part in the affray. "At one time the fighting was on the banks of the

[1] Alison's *History of Europe.*

stream and amongst the lower houses; at another upon the rugged heights and round the chapel, and some of the enemy's skirmishers even penetrated completely through towards the main position."[1]

For a moment the upper village seemed lost. A heavy column followed the tirailleurs closely, and, unchecked by a well-directed fusilade, the enemy crowned the chapel ridge, and announced with loud cheers that Fuentes was at last their own. That triumph was a short one. Colonel Mackinnon directed the British battalions to advance, and gallantly that order was obeyed. Supported by the 71st and 79th, Colonel Wallace led his own regiment on; and his brief address—"At them, Eighty-eight!" was answered with the soul-stirring huzza with which an Irish regiment rushes to the onset. The imperial guard waited and received the charge—bayonet crossed bayonet—and the combatants fought hand to hand. But it was the struggle of a moment, and the best soldiers of France gave way before the Connaught Rangers. In the awful shock, many were impaled and fairly lifted from the ground;[2] while broken, trodden down, and slaughtered, the routed enemy were forced in wild disorder by the Irish and Highland soldiers through the same street by which, in all the confidence of approaching victory, they had so recently and gallantly advanced.

The French loss was never accurately given. It was erroneously estimated after the action at little short of 5000 *hors de combat*, but probably half the amount would come nearer to the truth. The French absurdly stated their casualties at 400, and one circumstance alone would prove that this was ridiculously incorrect, as 500 of their dead and wounded horses were left upon the battle-ground.

Evening closed the combat. Massena's columns on the right were halted, and his 6th corps, with which he had endeavoured to storm Fuentes d'Oñoro, was withdrawn—the

[1] Napier [2] Alison.

whole French army bivouacking in the order in which they had stood when the engagement closed. The British lighted their fires, posted their pickets, and occupied the field they had so bravely held; and "both parties lay down to rest, with a confident assurance on their minds that the battle was only intermitted till the return of daylight."

A brigade of the light division relieved the gallant defenders of Fuentes; and preparatory to the expected renewal of attack, some works were thrown up to defend the upper village and the ground behind it. But these precautions were unnecessary; Massena remained during the next day in front of his antagonist, but exhibited no anxiety to renew the combat. The 7th found the British, as usual, under arms at dawn, but the day passed as quietly as the preceding one had done. On the 8th, the French columns were observed in full retreat, marching on the road to Ciudad Rodrigo; thus proving that the French Marshal, with an army reinforced by every battalion and squadron he could collect from Galicia and Castile, had been beaten by four divisions of the British army. With that unblushing assurance, however, for which the French Marshals have been remarkable, defeat was tortured into conquest, and Massena did not hesitate to call Fuentes d'Oñoro a victory. But the falsity was self-apparent—the avowed object for which the battle had been fought was unattained—he failed in succouring the beleaguered city—and Almeida was left to its fate.

Massena's retreat was instantly followed up by a closer blockade of that fortress, which he had avowedly crossed the Agueda to relieve; and as it was known that the scanty supply of food within the walls of Almeida was almost exhausted, the fall of the city was deemed inevitable. Brennier, who had already distinguished himself at Vimiero, where he had been wounded and taken prisoner, but subsequently exchanged, was governor; and to a more trusty

soldier the custody of a place of strength had never been confided.

Although fully expecting that the Prince of Essling would succeed in his operations, and oblige the blockading division to withdraw, Brennier, nevertheless, had minded the works, and made every preparation by which he might, if necessary, ruin the defences of the place. The heavy firing at Fuentes told him that a severe action had been fought. A day passed—no succour came; and during the night a French private reached the fortress, having with wonderful sagacity eluded the sentries and pickets who were on duty. Tillet confirmed Brennier's suspicions that Massena had been seriously repulsed, and brought with him, at the same time, the Prince of Essling's order for the immediate evacuation of Almeida.

For two days Brennier continued his work of destruction; and it was effected with so much cleverness, that frequently explosions attracted no particular attention from the blockaders. At midnight of the 10th, all being ripe for the attempt, the mines were fired, and by moonlight the garrison issued from the fortress in solid columns, bayoneting any sentries whom they encountered, and passing between the quarters of the reserves with a precision that seemed unaccountable. Lord Wellington was justly irritated at this singular escape; and, indeed, the partial escape of the garrison of Almeida was, in every point of view, a most annoying and discreditable occurrence. "It seemed as if, by this untoward event," says a staff officer, "all the advantages obtained by the battle of Fuentes d'Oñoro were thrown away. Not that we very deeply regretted the escape of the individuals: they were brave men, had made a bold venture, and deserved that it should be crowned with success; but it was mortifying to reflect that now Massena might, with some show of reason, speak of his late operation as a victory, and not as a defeat. He might, in a specious

manner, inform Europe that he had manœuvred merely for the purpose of bringing off the garrison of Almeida; and as the garrison had actually escaped, how could we contradict him? It is not worth while longer to dwell on this affair; but I will venture to affirm that no one who witnessed the effect this disappointment produced upon our army will ever be able to forget it."[1]

Immediately after the battle of Fuentes d'Oñoro, the Prince of Essling, with Ney, Junot, and Loison, returned to France, leaving the army of Portugal in cantonments on the Tormes, under the command of Marmont, Duke of Ragusa. At the same time intelligence reached Lord Wellington, which induced him to repair instantly to Elvas; and while Massena was hastening towards the Pyrenees, his successful opponent was hurrying to the Guadiana.

Badajoz had been invested by Marshal Beresford on its southern face upon the 4th of May, and on the other (right) bank of the river upon the 8th. But from the inefficiency of the Marshal's resources in the *materiel* for carrying on a siege, and the weakness of the numbers he could afford for the working and protecting parties, his operations went tardily on. On the 12th, intelligence reached him that Soult was in full march to relieve the place, and that his advanced guard was already at Llerena. Not a moment was to be lost; his force must be instantly concentrated; orders to that effect were issued accordingly, and the siege of Badajoz was raised.

At an interview at Valverde with the Spanish generals on the 13th, the intelligence of the rapid approach of the Duke of Dalmatia having been confirmed, it was unanimously determined that a battle should be risked; and Albuera having been selected as the best position, Blake undertook that the detached divisions of the Spanish army should be concentrated there before noon of the 15th.

[1] Lord Londonderry's Narrative.

The village of Albuera is a street of mean houses, with a church, situated on a little river, from which it is named. This village is traversed by the high road leading from Seville to Badajoz; which, about two hundred yards to the right, crosses the river by a handsome bridge of stone. Immediately to the left of Albuera, and just below the rough and rising ground on which it stands, there is another bridge, of unhewn stone, old, narrow, and incommodious. The river in summer is not above knee-deep. Its banks to the left of the old bridge, and directly in front of the village, are very abrupt and difficult; but to the right of the main bridge the passage of the stream is easy for all arms.

The position chosen by the allied leaders was an undulating ridge, having the Albuera river in its front and the Arroya in its rear. The extreme extent might be four miles. A rivulet called the Ferdia unites itself immediately above the village with the Albuera; and the intermediate surface, and the whole country beyond the larger stream, are thickly, but dispersedly, covered with ilex trees, a species of wood sufficient to conceal the formation but not interrupt the movements of an army. At three in the afternoon of the 15th the allied cavalry were driven in great confusion over the Albuera, abandoning the wooded heights to the enemy, an advantage of which Soult instantly availed himself.

With but a few miles to march, Blake moved so tardily that his leading brigades did not reach their intended battle-ground until midnight, and the whole were not up for some hours afterwards. In his disposition of the allies, Beresford gave the Spaniards the right of the position, as the ground was more elevated, and consequently less assailable. But unfortunately a wooded height which overlooked the Valverde road was left unoccupied; and this mistake enabled the French Marshal to concentrate during the night 15,000

men and 40 pieces of artillery within cannon-shot; and any advantage the ground might have afforded for defence was greatly overbalanced by the facilities of attack which the possession of the Valverde wood gave to an enemy, who knew so well as the Duke of Dalmatia did how the omission could be turned to the best account.

The Portuguese brigades were on the left, the British in the centre, and the cavalry in the rear. The allied force amounted to 30,000 men, of whom about 2000 were cavalry. Of these, nearly one-half were Spanish troops; the remainder British and Portuguese in nearly an equal proportion.

In gross numbers the French Marshal was inferior to his opponent; in infantry, he was weaker by a third; but in the other arms dangerously superior. He brought 4000 cavalry and 50 heavy guns into action; all were French troops; and all consequently admirable soldiers. In every requisite Soult's *corps d'armée* was complete; and, save his master, few could employ it more skilfully, and none with more promptitude and determination.

After a careful *reconnaissance* on the evening of the 15th, the Duke of Dalmatia selected the right of the allies as the object for his greatest effort. Favoured by the darkness, he lodged Girard's corps, Ruty's artillery, and the cavalry of Latour Maubourg, in the wood; and when morning broke, a powerful force was already formed in close column, and perfectly concealed, though within ten minutes' march of the Spanish line.

"The enemy, on the morning of the 16th, did not long delay his attack. At eight o'clock he was observed to be in movement, and his cavalry was seen passing the rivulet of Albuera, considerably above our right; and shortly after, he marched out of the wood opposite to us a strong force of cavalry, and two heavy columns of infantry pointing them to our front, as if to attack the village and bridge

of Albuera. During this time, under cover of his vastly superior cavalry, he was filing the principal body of his infantry over the river beyond our right; and it was not long before his intention appeared to be to turn us by that flank, and to cut us off from Valverde."[1]

On perceiving that the right was seriously menaced, Beresford had sent Colonel Hardinge to request that Blake would change his front. But the Spanish General doggedly insisted that the village was the true object of attack, and refused to correct his alignment. The Marshal rode in person to the right; and as the French columns were now observed in rapid march, "yielding to this evidence, Blake proceeded to make the evolution, yet with such pedantic slowness that Beresford, impatient of his folly, took the direction himself."[2]

But before the change could be effected, the day might have been considered by Beresford as lost. "Two-thirds of the French were in a compact order of battle on a line perpendicular to his right, and his army, disordered and composed of different nations, was still in the difficult act of changing its front. It was in vain that he endeavoured to form the Spanish line sufficiently in advance to give room for the second division to support it; the French guns opened, their infantry threw out a heavy musketry, and their cavalry, outflanking the front and charging here and there, put the Spaniards in disorder at all points; in a short time the latter gave way, and Soult, thinking the whole army was yielding, pushed forward his columns, while his reserves also mounted the hill, and General Ruty placed all the batteries in position."[3]

Seeing the desperate state of affairs, General William Stewart bravely but rashly endeavoured to restore the battle; and pushing his brigade up the hill, he mounted,

[1] Beresford's Despatch to Wellington.
[2] Napier. [3] Ibid.

for greater despatch, by columns of companies. But as the regiments were endeavouring to open into line, each as it crowned the ridge in the loose order it had advanced in, the French light cavalry, under cover of a heavy shower of rain, passed round the right flank of the brigade, and came in a thundering onset direct upon their rear. A sad slaughter ensued; and every regiment except the 31st, which fortunately had not begun to deploy, was literally cut to pieces. The lancers galloped right and left, spearing men without mercy who could neither escape, nor, from confusion and surprise, offer an effective resistance; while the Spaniards, regardless that their fire was falling fast upon the English ranks, kept up an unabating fusilade; but when ordered to advance and succour men who were perishing through the brave but rash celerity with which they had rushed to their assistance, no power could move them forward.

Happily the weather cleared, and the distressed brigade was observed by General Lumley, who rode at speed to the rescue. The British cavalry charged nobly. In turn, the lancers were taken in the rear; and numbers of these desperadoes fell beneath the sabres of the English horsemen. The mist which had favoured this sanguinary charge, averted also in a great degree the fatal consequences it must have otherwise produced. Soult, from the obscurity of the weather, could not see the battle-field with sufficient clearness to allow him to push forward his infantry and consummate the destruction of a brigade already half exterminated. The 31st regiment steadily maintained its ground—the British artillery came up—Houghton's brigade cleared the hill and deployed in beautiful order—two Spanish regiments were brought forward, and the battle was restored.

Though for a moment checked, the French soon renewed their efforts to break the English line; but the British regiments stood with stubborn gallantry that refused to

yield an inch. On both sides the batteries poured torrents of grape at half range, and the roar of musketry was incessant. Upon the close formation of the French, the storm fell with terrible violence,—whole sections fell,—but still these noble soldiers remained unshaken by this crushing fire, and their reserves were coming rapidly up. A column appeared already moving round the right flank of the British,—ammunition failed,—their fusilade gradually became feebler,—the lancers charged again, and a battery was taken. That moment was the crisis. To retreat, was Beresford's first thought; orders were being issued to commence it, when Colonel Hardinge saw that the battle might yet be won, and without having obtained the Marshal's permission, he ordered the 4th division and a brigade of the 2d to advance, and thus redeemed the fortunes of a day which all besides thought desperate.

In a few minutes more the remnant of the British must have abandoned the hill or perished. The French reserve was on its march to assist the front column of the enemy, while with the allies all was in confusion; and as if the slaughter required increase, a Spanish and English regiment were firing in mutual error upon each other. Six guns were in possession of th French, and their lancers, riding furiously over the field, threatened the feeble remnant of the British still in line, and speared the wounded without mercy. At this fearful moment the boundless gallantry of British officers displayed itself; Colonel Arbuthnot, under the double musketry, rushed between the mistaken regiments, and stopped the firing; Cole pushed up the hill, scattered the lancers, recovered the guns, and passed the right of the skeleton of Houghton's brigade, at the same instant that Abercrombie appeared upon its left. Leaving the broken regiments in its rear, the fusilier brigade came forward with imposing gallantry, and boldly confronted the French, now reinforced by a part of its reserve, and who were, as they

believed, coming forward to annihilate the "feeble few" that had still survived the murderous contest. From the daring attitude of the fresh regiments, Soult perceived too late that the battle was not yet won; and, under a tremendous fire of artillery, he endeavoured to break up his close formation and open out his front. For a moment the storm of grape, poured from Ruty's well-served artillery, staggered the fusiliers; but it was only for a moment. Though Soult rushed into the thickest of the fire, and encouraged and animated his men,—though the cavalry gathered on their flank and threatened it with destruction, on went those noble regiments; volley after volley falling into the crowded ranks of their enemy, and cheer after cheer pealing to heaven, in answer to the clamorous outcry of the French, as the boldest urged the others forward.

Nothing could check the fusiliers; they kept gradually advancing, while the incessant rolling of their musketry slaughtered the crowded sections of the French, and each moment embarrassed more and more Soult's efforts to open out his encumbered line. The enemy's reserve coming forward to support their comrades, was forced to the very edge of the plateau, and increased the crowd without remedying the disorder. The English volleys rolled on faster and more deadly than ever, a horrid carnage making all attempts to hold the hill in vain, and thus uselessly increased an unavailing slaughter. Unable to bear the withering fire, the shattered columns of the French were no longer able to sustain themselves,—the mass were driven over the ridge,—and trampling each other down, the shattered column sought refuge at the bottom of the hill. On that bloody height stood the conquerors. From 1500 muskets a parting volley fell upon the routed column as it hurried down the height. Where was the remainder of the proud array of England, which on the morning had exceeded 6000 combatants? Stretched coldly in the sleep of death, or

bleeding on the battle-ground! At nine o'clock the conflict commenced, at two it closed, and the French, under a heavy fire of artillery, withdrew their beaten infantry across the river, and left the field of battle to the conquerors.

A tempestuous night closed the memorable day of Albuera. The rain, which during the action had fallen heavily at intervals, became more constant and severe as evening advanced; and the streams which rolled down the heights and mingled with the waters of the river were not unfrequently observed to be deeply tinged with blood. The village of Albuera had been plundered and destroyed by the enemy,—every house was roofless, every inhabitant had disappeared,—and had there been a place of shelter near, there was neither carriage nor beast of burden by which the wounded could have been removed. Throughout the night, and during the following day, the dead and the disabled lay upon the field as they had fallen, and nothing could be more painful than the groans and complainings of the wounded. Almost every man who had escaped unhurt was needed for picket duty; and the few who remained otherwise disposable, were quite unequal to afford assistance to half the sufferers who required it. "In this cruel situation Beresford sent Colonel Hardinge to demand assistance from Blake; but wrath and mortified pride were predominant in that General's breast, and he refused; saying it was customary with the allied armies for each to take care of its own wounded; and he declined extending the least relief to these heroic sufferers, who, by a prodigal expenditure of their blood, had saved his sluggish legions from extermination."[1]

That such continued and desperate fighting must cause an enormous loss may be readily imagined. Besides 2000 Spaniards and 500 Germans and Portuguese placed *hors*

[1] Napier.

de combat, the British casualties amounted to 4407, an enormous loss when it is remembered that little more than 6500 English soldiers were actually on the battle ground. Almost all the field officers were killed or wounded. Houghton died cheering his men on, and Myers and Duckworth at the heads of their respective regiments.

Few regiments could muster in the evening a third of the number with which they went into action; and the loss sustained by the 57th—known afterwards by the *sobriquet* of "die-hards"—stands without a parallel. Its strength when led into fire was about five hundred and seventy bayonets; and its casualties at two o'clock were twenty-three officers, and above four hundred rank and file.

Both armies claimed a victory; but the title rested indubitably with the allies. Soult was master of a howitzer, some stands of colours, and 500 prisoners, of whom the greater proportion joined their regiments within a fortnight. Beresford remained upon the battle-field, from which his assailants had been deforced, and his trophies were sad but certain attendants on success—the bodies of the slain, and numbers of maimed unfortunates, too badly wounded to bear removal. Soult's total loss exceeded 8000 men; and in common with the British, the French field officers suffered heavily. Two generals were killed and three wounded, while a thousand of the enemy lay disabled on the heights; "and horrid piles of carcasses within their lines told, with dreadful eloquence, who were the conquerors."

The banner gained from a regiment almost exterminated in its defence, confers more honour in the loss than in the acquisition. Through many a hand the English colours passed, before a single stand was obtained by the assailants. Two were picked up upon the ground, for all immediately about them were dead or dying, and several, like those "of the Buffs, were recovered after signal heroism had been displayed in their defence. Ensign Thomas, who

bore one of the flags, was surrounded, and asked to give it up. 'Not but with my life!' was his answer, and his life was the instant forfeit; but the standard thus taken was regained, and the manner in which it had been defended will not be forgotten when it shall be borne again to battle. Ensign Walsh, who carried the other colours, had the staff broken in his hand by a cannon ball, and fell severely wounded; but, more anxious about his precious charge than himself, he separated the flag from the shattered staff, and secured it in his bosom, from whence it was taken when his wounds were dressed after the battle."[1]

It was generally expected that Soult on the next morning would have renewed the combat; and certainly, he was in every arm infinitely more effective than his opponent. The storm of war had fallen heavily on Beresford's best troops; and though he sternly held his ground, he dreaded a second trial for which he knew his strength was quite unequal. On the evening of the 17th, a British brigade joined him by a forced march; and on the same night, Soult sent off all his wounded men who could bear removal, to Seville, and retreated next morning by a flank march on Solano. Hamilton's Portuguese brigade partially reinvested Badajoz; and the allied cavalry were despatched to follow the enemy with caution, as from their great inferiority no serious impression could be expected.

Albuera holds a singular character among the peninsular battles. It was a glorious display of British bravery, and a useless expenditure of British blood. On its ensanguined heights the decided superiority of the "island soldiery" was established; and the high compliment was paid by the ablest of the French Marshals that "they could not be persuaded they were beaten."

The personal bravery of both Generals was boundless; and both were seen throughout the day wherever the battle raged most furiously. By voice and gestures, Soult urged

[1] Southey.

his soldiers forward; and when they finally recoiled from the slaughtering volleys of the fusiliers, to the last the French Marshal was observed "in the battle's front," using brave but vain attempts to rally and renew the combat. "During the hottest of the action, Marshal Beresford exposed himself with a degree of intrepidity which could hardly fail of spreading an example of heroism around. The person of the General-in-Chief was indeed seen everywhere, a gallant soldier!"[1] He repeatedly dragged the Spanish officers from their ranks, compelling them to lead their men forward, and show them the way; and when individually charged by a Polish lancer, he grappled his adversary by the throat, threw him from his saddle, and an orderly dragoon despatched him.

On the evening of the 15th Lord Wellington left Villa Fermosa, accompanied by a part of his staff, and travelling at the rate of sixty miles a day, without any baggage whatever, arrived in Elvas before dark on the 19th. Whilst performing this arduous journey, a variety of rumours relative to late transactions met him at every stage. At one place it was stated that the enemy were coming on in force, and that a battle might hourly be expected; at another, that Marshal Beresford had resolved upon a retreat, not feeling himself equal to oppose the French; and at a third, that a great action had been fought, and that it had ended in favour of the allies. On the 21st, Lord Wellington rode over the field of battle, examined the position carefully, and expressed himself as perfectly satisfied with all that had occurred. In a letter written next day he thus makes honourable mention of the battle:—

"You will have heard of the Marshal's action on the 16th; the fighting was desperate, and the loss of the British has been very severe; but, adverting to the nature of the contest, and the manner in which they held their ground against all the efforts the whole French army could make

[1] Napier.

against them, notwithstanding all the losses which they had sustained, I think this action one of the most glorious and honourable to the character of the troops of any that has been fought during the war."

At this period of the campaign, General Hill arrived at Lisbon from England; and Lord Wellington was enabled to restore his Portuguese command to Marshal Beresford, and reappoint Hill to the second division which illness had obliged him to resign. It was imperative indeed that an effort should be made to restore the Portuguese army. The military attitude which Lord Wellington had assumed offered a singular contrast to that of the preceding year. Then, it was questionable whether, even within the lines of Lisbon, he should have been enabled to maintain himself; now, he had expelled beyond the frontiers the last Frenchman of that splendid army, especially directed by Napoleon "to drive the leopards to the sea." One fortress had already been recovered,—another was besieged,—and, with a divided army, Wellington had fought and won two battles. Still, victories produced a heavy expenditure of human life, and increasing successes required an increase of means; but while his operations progressively extended, he found the only allies upon whom he could place reliance deterioriate in strength and efficiency, until the diminution of the Portuguese army seemed the forerunner of its total dismemberment.

The superiority of Lord Wellington's strength upon the Guadiana, he was well aware, could be but temporary, and Badajoz must fall at once, or not at all. The place was too important for the French to allow it to be lost without making strenuous exertions for its deliverance. Marmont, no doubt, would move with all his disposable force upon the Tagus; and Soult, more formidable than ever from the large reinforcements which had joined him, would easily effect a junction with the army of Portugal, and thus complete a magnificent *corps d'armée*, too powerful in every

arm for anything which Lord Wellington could oppose to it. Nor could the siege be immediately commenced. The battering-train had been injured so much in its hasty removal to Elvas, that, by the engineer's report, eleven days would be necessary to repair the carriages, and render the guns serviceable.

Limited in time, and crippled in everything required for carrying a siege through, Lord Wellington endeavoured to overcome by energy and daring, disadvantages from which others would have shrunk at once. On June 3d, his batteries opened. On the 6th, San Christoval was assaulted without success. Again, upon the evening of the 9th, the trial was made and proved unfortunate: and on the 10th the siege was raised. The loss of the allies during these operations had been 481 killed and wounded.

That the siege of Badajoz should fail, was an event for which Lord Wellington was prepared; and his official correspondence shows that the result of the attempt was always considered by himself as more than doubtful. He had few attached to the army who knew aught of engineering. Sappers and miners he had none, and a large proportion of his gunners were Portuguese, men full of zeal and gallantry, but sadly wanting in experience. "The ordnance employed at this siege, besides being of an excessively bad quality, was also totally inadequate in quantity to the reduction of such a fortress as Badajoz, although everything Elvas could supply was drawn from that garrison. The guns, it has been stated, were of brass, false in their bore, and already worn by previous service, and the shot were of all shapes and diameters, giving a windage from one-tenth to half an inch. The howitzers used as mortars were defective equally with the guns: their chambers were all of unequal size, the shells did not fit the bore, and their beds were unsteady; so that the practice was necessarily vague and uncertain, and they proved of little value."[1]

[1] Jones's *Journals of Sieges.*

CHAPTER IX.

THE advance of the Duke of Dalmatia confirmed Wellington's resolution of remaining at Albuera to the last moment that prudence would warrant, in the hope that he might succeed in bringing Soult to action, before he could receive assistance from Marmont, who had reached Truxillo on June 14th. The caution of the French Marshal, however, was extreme; and on the 17th, the allies recrossed the Guadiana, taking a position on the Baya, while, on the 19th, the enemy introduced their convoys into Badajoz; and that fortress, when reduced to great extremity, was a second time abundantly replenished with provisions and all the munitions of war.

The position of the allies was chosen with admirable judgment. It embraced a surface of scarcely four leagues, the right extending to the lower bridge of the Caya, and the left appuied upon the heights over the Gevora, and protected by the fortress of Campo Mayor. The nature of the ground effectually masked the dispositions of the allied brigades from observation by the enemy, while excellent communications enabled Lord Wellington to move the mass of his army with celerity on any threatened point; and from the flatness of the country round Badajoz, any hostile movement was discernible fron Fort La Lippe and the numerous watch towers which stud the Portuguese frontier.

It was necessary, indeed, that the strength of his position should compensate for Lord Wellington's numerical inferiority. The united army in his front outnumbered him in every arm, comprising 63,000 infantry, 7500 cavalry, and 90 pieces of cannon; consequently the allied general was weaker in infantry by 10,000, while in cavalry and artillery the French Marshals exceeded him nearly by one-half.

The opinion in the British camp was general, that a battle must be fought, and on the morning of the 24th the movements of the enemy tended to confirm this belief. Their cavalry and horse artillery crossed the Guadiana in two heavy columns, the right being directed towards Campo Mayor, and the left on Elvas. Although the allied divisions got immediately under arms, their masses were never exposed to view; and Soult and Marmont, after manœuvring in front of the position until evening, ended their unsatisfactory reconnaissance and withdrew. The right column had been steadily and successfully checked by the English and Portuguese heavy cavalry, but on the left the enemy had better fortune; a squadron of the 11th Light Dragoons was lost through the inexperience of their commanding officer, and the 2d German Hussars driven in great confusion into Elvas, raising the casualties on this occasion to more than one hundred and fifty men.

For a month the French Marshals remained together; their numerous cavalry scouring the face of the country to an immense extent, and wasting it of everything that was convertible into sustenance for either men or horses. At last, these precarious supplies failed altogether; and Soult and Marmont retired from Estremadura,—the latter marching northwards, and the former falling back upon Seville.

The recession of the French armies produced an immediate change in the positions of the allies; and Lord Wellington, leaving Hill in the Alentejo in observation of Gerard, changed his headquarters from the Quinto de St.

Joaô to Portalegre, and subsequently to Fuente Guinaldo. The occupation of the line of the Coa was highly desirable; it placed the posts and villages in the more immediate vicinity of Ciudad Rodrigo in the possession of the allied commander, and thus cut off all casual supplies from a fortress already straitened by the guerillas of Julian Sanchez, and separated from its covering army by a space of fifty miles. In fact, Rodrigo was the object at which Lord Wellington had secretly aimed; and measures had been taken to get up a powerful siege train from Lisbon, and forward all necessary arrangements for the immediate reduction of a fortress, which he justly considered, in a military point of view, to be invaluable.

The consequences Lord Wellington expected to result from his presence on the frontier were speedily realised. While he remained upon the Coa, the efforts of the French Marshals were completely paralysed; and, with immense means, they found themselves unable to effect commensurate objects, because these means were not disposable. Distant services they dared not undertake; for if they ventured to detach troops, they feared, with good reason, that Ciudad Rodrigo would be instantly besieged; and unless the blockade could be broken, and supplies safely and speedily introduced, the place could not hold out for any length of time. To effect the latter, a grand junction of the armies under Marmont, Souhaur, and Dorsenne was determined: and having collected large convoys at Plasencia and Salamanca, the united force assembled at Tamamers on September 22d, having previously apprised the governor of Rodrigo that the fortress would be relieved.

This junction of the French corps produced a magnificent army. Their total strength was over sixty thousand men, of which the cavalry might be reckoned at nearly seven thousand, and the artillery comprised one hundred and ten guns. A finer army for its numbers was never ranged be-

neath the eagles of Napoleon; for all the reinforcements were veteran soldiers, and of these a large proportion had been detached from the Imperial Guard. Lord Wellington, perfectly aware of the object, but not exactly of the force by which it would be effected, concentrated his divisions as far as the locality of the country would allow. Determined that the fortress should not be relieved, excepting by an army numerically superior, and anxious to see the amount of a force, of which so many conflicting accounts had reached him, he made his dispositions accordingly.

In the progress of a campaign, situations of interest and beauty are not unfrequent, and nothing could be more striking than the first appearance of the united armies as they advanced to the relief of Ciudad Rodrigo. Far as the eye could range, the roads from Salamanca and Tamames were crowded with dense masses of sparkling soldiery, "accompanied by a countless number of waggons, cars, and loaded mules. Their progress was slow and apparently cautious; but towards evening the convoy began to enter the place, under cover of about fifteen squadrons of cavalry, which passed the Agueda, and a large column of infantry, which halted upon the plain. Still no symptoms were manifested of a design to cross the river in force, or to attempt anything further than the object which was thus attained; for the advanced cavalry withdrew at dusk, and all bivouacked that night near the town. In the morning, however, as soon as objects became discernible, one corps of cavalry, amounting to at least five-and-twenty squadrons, supported by a whole division of infantry, appeared in motion along the great road, which, leading from Ciudad Rodrigo to Guinaldo, leaves El Bodon on the left; whilst another, less numerous perhaps, but, like the former, strongly supported by infantry, marched direct upon Espeja. They both moved with admirable steadiness and great regularity; and as the sun

happened to be out, and the morning clear and beautiful, their appearance was altogether warlike and imposing."[1]

It was a moment when the boldest spirit might have felt alarm. Advanced upon a naked height, the allies at El Bodon were isolated and unsupported; for, from necessity, the British brigades were widely separated from each other. To hold the heights was their best hope, for to retire over an extensive plain in the presence of an overwhelming cavalry force, supported by light cavalry, would have been an attempt too perilous for any but desperate men to risk. The danger of their position was apparent to all; none blanched from the trial, and with fearless intrepidity they waited for the French assault.

While squadron after squadron were defiling along the road, the English infantry remained in columns of battalions behind the ridge, and the cavalry stood dismounted, each dragoon with the bridle on his arm, and apparently as careless of coming events as if he were on the parade-ground of his barrack, waiting for the trumpet call to "fall in." But when the advanced squadrons were about to mount the ridge, the infantry formed line, the dragoons sprang to their saddles, and the artillery, which had occasionally cannonaded the hostile squadrons as they came within their range, opened with additional spirit, and poured from the height a torrent of grape and case shot that occasioned a serious loss to the enemy.

The French appeared to feel sensibly the effect produced by the fire, and a brigade cheered and charged up the heights. The men stood by their guns to the last, but eventually they were obliged to retire. The French dragoons gained the battery, and the cannon were taken. Their possession by the enemy was but for a moment. The 5th regiment came steadily forward in line, and after delivering a shattering volley, lowered their bayonets, and boldly

[1] Lord Londonderry's Narrative.

advanced to charge the cavalry. This—the first instance of horsemen being assailed by infantry in line—was brilliantly successful. The French were hurried down the height, and the guns recaptured, limbered up, and brought away.

But valour could not maintain the height against numbers so fearfully disproportionate. A heavy column had moved unnoticed round the rear of the British right, and the position being turned was abandoned. Now was the moment to effect their destruction; for the British infantry were in rapid retreat, and the French squadrons, in all the assurance of success, coming down at speed to annihilate them.

But they had yet to learn of what stern stuff the British soldier is composed. In a moment the 5th and 77th formed square, and in steady silence awaited the coming onset. The charge was made—the cheering of the dragoons pealed over the battle-field as they came on at speed, and with a fiery determination that nothing apparently could withstand. Against every face of the square a hostile squadron galloped; the earth shook—the cheers rose louder—another moment of that headlong speed must bring the dragoons upon the bayonets of the kneeling front rank. Then from the British square a shattering volley was poured in,—the smoke cleared away, and, but a few yards from the faces of the square, men and horses were rolling on the plain in death. The charge was repulsed, the ranks disordered; and the French dragoons, recoiling from that fearless array they had vainly striven to penetrate, rode hastily off to re-form their broken ranks, and remove themselves from an incessant stream of musketry which had already proved so fatal.

The retreat of the right brigade was conducted by Picton in person; and the same daring, the same skill, and the same good fortune attended it. The whole of these gallant regiments united on the plain, and fell back on Guinaldo, which, with Cole's division, they occupied.

The position was not particularly good; and as one of much greater strength lay immediately in his rear, Lord Wellington issued orders for the troops to retire from Guinaldo, and take up ground he had previously selected on the Coa. From delay in the transmission of that order to the light brigade, and General Craufurd considering, when it did arrive, that it would be hazardous to ford the Agueda then, he determined to cross the mountains, and join the main body by a circuitous route, being ignorant that the passes of Gata and Perales were already in possession of the French. Lord Wellington despatched instant orders for the division to countermarch upon Robleda; and strengthening both flanks of his position with 13,000 infantry and 2500 horsemen, he remained boldly on Guinaldo.

The night of the 25th, to some who knew how critically Lord Wellington was situated, passed in anxiety and suspense, but the soldiery, wearied with the exertions they had made during the day, slept soundly in their dangerous bivouacs. Fires blazed along the allied line, and every appearance bore the semblance of confidence and defiance.

"Long before dawn, however, all were astir and in their places; and the different regiments looked anxiously for the moment which should behold the commencement of a game as desperate as any which they had been yet called upon to play. But instead of indulging our troops as they expected, Marmont contented himself with making an exhibition of his force, and causing it to execute a variety of manœuvres in our presence; and it must be confessed that a spectacle more striking has rarely been seen. The large body of cavalry which followed us to our position, and had bivouacked during the night in the woods adjoining, were first drawn up in compact array, as if waiting for the signal to push on. By and by, nine battalions of infantry, attended by a proportionate quantity of artillery, made their appearance, and formed into columns, lines, échelons,

and squares. Towards noon, twelve battalions of the imperial guard came upon the ground in one solid mass; and as each soldier was decked out with feathers and shoulder-knots of a bloody hue, their appearance was certainly imposing in no ordinary degree. The solid column, however, soon deployed into columns of battalions—a movement which was executed with a degree of quickness and accuracy quite admirable; and then, after having performed several other evolutions with equal precision, the guards piled their arms and prepared to bivouac. Next came another division of infantry in rear of the guards, and then a fresh column of cavalry, till it was computed that the enemy had collected on this single point a force of not less than 25,000 men. Nor did the muster cease to go on as long as daylight lasted. To the very latest moment we could observe men, horses, guns, carriages, tumbrils, and ammunition-waggons flocking into the encampment, as if it were the design of the French General to bring his whole disposable force to bear against the position of Fuente Guinaldo."[1]

Indeed the salvation of the light division was achieved by Wellington, when old-school commanders would have abandoned it in despair. "The object was certainly one of an importance sufficient to justify the resolution; but the resolution itself was one of those daring strokes of genius which the ordinary rules of art were never made to control. The position was contracted, of no great natural strength in front, and easily to be turned; the entrenchments constructed were only a few breastworks and two weak field redoubts, open in rear, and without palisades."[2]

While Marmont was amusing himself with this singular review, Lord Wellington looked on with the calmness of an

[1] Lord Londonderry's Narrative. [2] Napier.

ordinary spectator. Scarcely a third of the allied army was within his reach; and sixty thousand troops, some of them hitherto unconquered, with one hundred and ten pieces of artillery, manœuvring barely out of cannon range. "It was at this moment that a Spanish general, remarkable for his zeal and gallantry, and a great favourite of Wellington's, observed to him, 'Why, here you are with a couple of weak divisions in front of the whole French army, and you seem quite at your ease; why, it is enough to put any man in a fever.'—'I have done, according to the very best of my judgment, all that can be done,' said Wellington; 'therefore I care not either for the enemy in front, or for anything which they may say at home.'"

But Marmont allowed the golden opportunity to pass. During the night Wellington retreated, united his scattered brigades in their new position, and then courted rather than declined a battle. The affairs of Aldea da Ponte showed that no impression could be made; and having exhausted their provisions, the French armies retired on the 28th, covered by a cavalry rearguard far too powerful in numbers for Lord Wellington to molest.

The military talents of Lord Wellington had been already duly appreciated by the French; and his bold stand at Guinaldo, and masterly retreat upon the Coa, elicited their warmest admiration. In the conduct of these critical operations the allied General was personally present; and frequently, and, as his staff thought, imprudently exposed himself to fire. On one occasion, he narrowly escaped from being taken prisoner, having been deceived by the perplexing similarity of the dresses worn by the allied and French light cavalry.

When Marmont was assured that his formidable opponent had lain for six-and-thirty hours in his front, like Samson, shorn of his strength, nothing could surpass his astonishment save the mortification which it caused. The mischief

was, however, attributed by the French Marshal to planetary influence; and he somewhat prophetically exclaimed that "Wellington's star was brilliant as Napoleon's!"

On no occasion was the intrepidity of the officers on both sides more strikingly displayed. Many instances of personal daring were observed, and one very interesting occurrence is recorded. Felton Harvey, of the 14th Light Dragoons, had lost an arm in the course of previous service, but though unable to protect himself, he still was seen foremost in the fight. In a cavalry charge, he was encountered by a French officer. With an uplifted sword, the gallant horseman perceived when about to strike, that his opponent was defenceless. Instantly the *coup de sabre* was exchanged for a graceful salute, and, spurring his charger on, the chivalrous Frenchman rode into the thickest of the *mêlée*, to seek a trial with some abler antagonist.

Immediately on the retreat of the enemy, Lord Wellington broke up from his position in front of Alfayates, and leaving outpost duty and the observation of Ciudad Rodrigo to the light and fourth divisions, he crossed the Coa, and took cantonments in the villages on the left bank of the river. The weather became dreadfully wet; the accommodation for the soldiers was very wretched; disease increased frightfully, and, in a short time, sixteen thousand men were in hospital. Out-door pursuits were interrupted by the inclemency of the season; and a dull dispiriting season passed away, in which there was little to amuse and nothing to excite.

By the beginning of January all the preparations for the siege of Rodrigo were complete, and preliminary measures were already taken for an immediate investment of the fortress. Gallegos, Villa del Ciervo, and the Espeja had been made entrepôts for the siege stores; while Almeida formed the grand magazine for the battering train and ammunition.

Considering the season of the year, and the nakedness of the country for many miles around the threatened fortress, the intended operation was bold to a degree. The horses had scarcely any forage, and the men were literally destitute of bread or shelter. The new year came in inclemently—rain fell in torrents—and though the investment was delayed two days, one brigade (M'Kinnon's) that marched from Aldea da Ponte, left nearly four hundred men behind, in a route of only four-and-twenty miles, numbers of whom perished on the line of march, or died subsequently of fatigue.

The general appearance of Ciudad Rodrigo, and the country immediately around the works, has been already described. Since the French, however, had obtained possession of the place, they had made very judicious additions to its defences. Three convents, situated in the centre and on either flank of the suburbs, had been fortified, while that of Santa Cruz, at the north-west angle of the glacis, had been converted into an infantry post. A small redoubt had been also erected on the upper Tenson, supported by the fire of the convent of San Francisco, from which it was distant about 400 yards; and this redoubt completely secured the northern front of Rodrigo from being assailed.

Although the fords of the Agueda permitted the divisions to cross the river both above and below the town, yet the sudden rises to which the stream is liable in winter alarmed Lord Wellington; and to guard against all chances of his communications being interrupted by sudden floods, he laid down a trestle bridge at the ford of Marialva, six miles below the town. On the 8th of January, the light division forded the river at La Caridad, and formed the investment; and the engineers' stores were brought across the Agueda by the bridge, and parked 1800 yards from the fortress. During the day everything was kept as quiet as possible,

and an equal examination made on every side of the town, so as to prevent any suspicion of an immediate effort being intended, or betray to the garrison the point about to be attacked. At eight o'clock that evening the redoubt upon the upper Tenson was carried by assault. The affair was gallantly effected by three companies of the 52d, commanded by Lieut.-Colonel Colborne, and conducted by Lieutenant Thomson. The loss was trifling, and the possession of the work was found of immediate value.

Until the 11th the approaches were rapidly pushed forward, and the batteries and their magazines constructed. Some casualties occurred every day, but at this period the garrison distinguished the batteries from the other parts of the work, and attained their range so precisely, that two-thirds of their shells fell into them; and their round shot caused many casualties, particularly amongst those at work in the ditch next the place, whenever they unthinkingly exposed themselves. In consequence of this, and some very destructive effects produced from shells exploding in the ditch amongst the workmen, who could not jump out in time to save themselves, the exterior excavation was discontinued altogether, and the interior of the batteries was directed to be sunken to the necessary depth to furnish earth for the parapets. About this time also the garrison adopted the expedient of firing shells filled with powder, and having long fuses in salvos. Some of these falling together into the parapets blew away in an instant the work of hours.

On the 14th the irregular manner pursued by the allies, in introducing their reliefs to the trenches, had nearly produced a serious disaster. On the appearance of the division for duty, the guards and workmen generally drew off, leaving the trenches for the time without protection This unmilitary proceeding had been observed from the steeple of the cathedral, and in consequence the garrison

made a sally with five hundred men. The sortie succeeded in upsetting most of the gabions placed during the preceding night in advance of the first parallel. Some of the troops even penetrated into the right of the parallel, and others would have pushed into the batteries, and probably spiked the guns, had it not been for the steady conduct of a few workmen, collected into a body by an officer of engineers, who manned the parapets, and kept up such a steady fire as to induce the assailants to halt when within a few yards. On the approach of Lieut.-General Graham with the advance of the relieving division, the sortie retired into the town with little loss.

Intelligence in the meantime had been received that induced Lord Wellington to alter his system of attack. Marmont was collecting his detached divisions, and his avowed object being the relief of the place, Wellington determined to prevent it by storming Rodrigo without waiting to blow in the counterscarp—"in other words, to overstep the rules of science, and sacrifice life rather than time; for such was the capricious nature of the Agueda, that in one night a flood might enable a small French force to relieve the place."[1]

The sortie, added to the opening and lining of the embrasures, which the death of the acting engineer had embarrassed, delayed the breaching batteries from commencing their fire until half-past four in the afternoon. Then twenty-seven heavy guns opened; they were promptly answered by every piece of artillery which the garrison could bring to bear; and the united fire produced an effect more strikingly magnificent than it has been the ordinary good fortune of a British soldier to witness.

"The evening," says Lord Londonderry, "chanced to be remarkably beautiful and still; there was not a cloud in the sky, nor a breath of wind astir, when suddenly the roar

[1] Napier.

of artillery broke in upon its calmness, and volumes of smoke rose slowly from our batteries. These floating gently towards the town, soon enveloped the lower parts of the hill, and even the ramparts and bastions, in a dense veil; whilst the towers and summits, lifting their heads over the haze, showed like fairy buildings, or those unsubstantial castles which are sometimes seen in the clouds on a summer's day. The flashes from our guns, answered as they promptly were from the artillery in the place, the roar of their thunder reverberating among the remote mountains of the Sierra de Francisca; these, with the rattle of balls against the masonry, and the occasional crash as portions of the wall gave way, proved altogether a scene which, to be rightly understood, must be experienced."

To the 19th, with the usual incidents that attend a siege, the besiegers continued to breach, and the garrison to offer the boldest and most scientific opposition. The irresistible fire of the British guns had gradually ruined that portion of the works against which its violence was directed. The convent of San Francisco had been already taken with little resistance by the 40th regiment, the breaches rendered practicable, and a summons sent to the governor and declined.

A personal examination of the breaches confirmed Lord Wellington's previous opinion, that the assault might be given with success; and directing the fire of the breaching batteries to be turned against the guns upon the ramparts, he seated himself upon the reverse of an advanced approach, and wrote out the order of assault.

Courage, like other qualities, has its varieties. Some men are born brave; others acquire intrepidity from example; and even a timid spirit may be stimulated by action, until personal apprehension is overcome. Amid the crash of battle, the dullest soul catches a glorious impulse, and, for the time, casts off its natural torpidity. To exert, however,

that mental calmness which conveys, in brief and lucid language, the details of plans of action, requiring the agency of many, and whose success the misconception of an individual might destroy—this demands a philosophic concentration of thought, which many found foremost in the press of fight never can obtain.

This, the most important quality of a great general, Napoleon and Wellington possessed extensively; and when the fate of battle hung upon a hair, both were calm and self-collected, and the order upon which victory or defeat depended, was issued with a coolness that approached insensibility. The terrible attack at Essling was simply indicated by a gesture; and when tidings were brought upon that bloody evening, which might have palsied the firmest nerves, not a feature of Napoleon was seen to alter. Sitting on the embankment of a field-work, undisturbed by the roar of his own artillery or a responding thunder from the batteries of the fortress, Lord Wellington penned the plan of assault; and when that writing went forth, the doom of Ciudad Rodrigo was sealed!

Early in the day the order of attack had been issued by Lord Wellington; and the officers to whom the conduct of the assault was to be entrusted, had thus ample time allowed them to become perfectly apprised of the duties which they had respectively to perform. To many the day appeared interminably long, and some passed the tedious hours in real or affected merriment, but others in the performance of a more sacred duty—that of conveying to wives or relatives what might prove the last expressions of an undying regard.

To the third and light divisions, whose turns of duties fell upon the 19th, the assault was confided by Lord Wellington; and they marched from their cantonments to the more immediate vicinity of the trenches. A few minutes after six o'clock, the third moved to the rear of the

first parallel, two gun-shots from the main breach, while the light division formed behind a convent, three hundred yards in front of the smaller one. Darkness came on, and with it came the order to "Stand to arms." With calm determination the soldiers of the third division heard their commanding-officer announce the main breach as the object of attack, and every man prepared himself promptly for the desperate struggle. Off went the packs,—the stocks were unbuckled, —the cartouch-box arranged to meet the hand more readily, —flints were screwed home,—every one after his individual fancy fitting himself for action. The companies were carefully told off, the serjeants called the roll, and not a man was missing.

The bell from the tower of the cathedral tolled seven; and, in obedience to previous orders, the troops marched rapidly but silently to the assault. The third division, preceded by its storming party under Major Manners, a forlorn hope under Lieutenant Mackie, and accompanied by a body of sappers with hay-bags and ladders, made directly for the greater breach; while the light division, led by Major George Napier, with 300 volunteers, and a forlorn hope under Lieutenant Gurwood, were directed against the lesser one. A Portuguese brigade, commanded by General Pack, were to alarm the fortress on the opposite side, and threaten to escalade at the gate of St. Jago; and, should circumstances warrant the attempt, convert a false attack into a real one.

No piece of clock-work, however nicely arranged, could obey the will of its maker more accurately than the different columns obeyed that night the wish of their chief; and his orders were, in consequence, executed at every point with the same precision and regularity as if he had been manœuvring so many battalions upon parade. For a few moments the heavy tramp of many men put simultaneously into motion alone broke upon the solemn stillness of the

evening. But suddenly a shout upon the right of the line nearest the bridge was heard; it was taken up along the whole line of attack,—a spattering of musketry succeeded —the storming parties rushed forward to the breaches—and every gun upon the ramparts that would bear opened with one tremendous crash, and told that the garrison was prepared for the assault and ready to repel it.

At the first alarm the storming party of the third division advanced and descended the ditch. At the bottom, a range of heavy shells had been placed with continued fuses; but hurried by the suddenness of the attack, the French prematurely fired them, and their fury had fortunately expended itself before the assailants were close enough to suffer from a murderous explosion.

"General M'Kinnon's brigade instantly pushed up the breach in conjunction with the 5th and 94th regiments, which arrived at the same moment along the ditch from their right. The men mounted in a most gallant manner against an equally gallant resistance; and it was not till after a sharp struggle of some minutes that the bayonets of the assailants prevailed, and gained them a footing on the summit of the rampart. The defenders then concentrated behind the retrenchment, which they obstinately maintained, and a second severe struggle commenced. The lesser breach was, at the same time, assaulted with equal intrepidity, but more decided success. The darkness of the ditch occasioned a momentary confusion, which the fall of the leading officers increased; while the ardour of the light troops brought so many to the breach, that they choked its narrow aperture with their numbers. For a moment the assailants recoiled, but it was only to return more resolutely to the onset. A cheer was heard above the thunder of artillery,—up rushed the stormers,—the breach was gained,—the supporting regiments mounted in sections, formed on the rampart, the 52d

wheeling to the left, the 43d to the right, and that success alone would have decided the fate of Rodrigo.

Although the greater breach had been carried by the first rush, isolated by a rampart twelve feet deep in front, retrenched on either flank, and swept by the fire of a field-piece and musketry from the houses which overlooked and enfiladed it, the progress of the storming party was arrested, and men and officers fell fast. At this trying moment, the gallantry of an adventurous individual opened the gates of success. Mackie, who led the forlorn hope, dropping from the rampart into the town, discovered that the trench upon the right of the breach was cut quite across, and consequently that an opening was left by which the assailants might get in. Reascending the top of the breach, he led the men through the trench into the street; and the enemy on their appearance abandoned any further effort at defence and fled towards the citadel. The false attack by the Portuguese under General Pack had been equally effective. They carried by escalade a small redan in front of the St. Jago gate, and of course materially assisted in distracting the attention of the garrison by the alarm their movement had caused. Thus terminated the struggle for Rodrigo. Some of the garrison still offered a useless opposition and were put to the sword, but any who demanded quarter received it.

After all resistance had ceased, the usual scene of riot, plunder, and confusion, which by prescriptive right the stormers of a town enjoy, occurred. Every house was entered and despoiled; the spirit stores were forced open; the soldiery got desperately excited; and in the madness of their intoxication committed many acts of silly and wanton violence. All plundered what they could, and in turn they were robbed by their own companions. Brawls and bloodshed resulted; and the same men who, shoulder to shoulder, had won their way over the "imminent deadly

breach," fought with demoniac ferocity for some disputed article of plunder. At last, worn out by fatigue, and stupefied with brandy, they sank into brutal insensibility. On the second day, with few exceptions, the whole rejoined their regiments; the assault and sacking of Rodrigo appearing in their confused imaginations rather like some troubled dream than a sad reality of blood and violence.

The casualties attendant on the siege and storm amounted to above 1000; "and unhappily the loss of life did not end with the battle, for the next day, as the prisoners and their escort were marching out by the breach, an accidental explosion took place, and numbers of both were blown into the air." The military importance of Ciudad Rodrigo rendered it a valuable conquest; and its capture placed in Lord Wellington's hands 80 French officers and 1500 men. The arsenal was abundantly supplied; and besides the artillery of the place, consisting of one hundred and ten mounted guns, Marmont's battering train was taken with the fortress.

The splendid achievement of the conqueror of Rodrigo obtained an honourable requital. He was advanced, in Spain, to the rank of a grandee of the first order, with the title of Duque de Ciudad Rodrigo; by the Portuguese, he was made Marquis of Torres Vedras; and at home, raised to the earldom of Wellington, with an increased annuity of £2000 a year. In the debate which took place in the Lower House when the grant for supporting his additional honours was proposed, "Mr. Canning took occasion to state that a revenue of £5000 a year had been granted to Lord Wellington by the Portuguese Government when they conferred upon him the title of Conde de Vimeiro; that as Captain-General of Spain, £5000 a year had been offered him, and £7000 as Marshal in the Portuguese service, all of which he had declined, saying, "He would receive nothing from Spain and Portugal in their present state; he had only done his

duty to his country, and to his country alone he would look for reward."

It was a matter of surprise to all who were not aware of the extensive espionage employed on both sides, how accurately Lord Wellington and the French Marshals to whom he was opposed were acquainted with the objects and the capabilities of each other. At Lisbon, many persons in immediate connection with the Regency were more than suspected of holding a correspondence with the French; and their treachery was encouraged by the culpable misconduct of the Portuguese Government in not punishing criminals whose treasons had been established beyond a question. The English newspapers were regularly transmitted from Paris by Napoleon; and they teemed with intelligence mischievously correct, and that too, from the headquarters of the allied army; and though a circumstance of rare occurrence, if an intimation of what he intended to attempt escaped from Lord Wellington's lips to the Spaniards with whom he was in communication, through the indiscretion of these individuals, it was sure to reach the enemy. He says, writing to his brother,—"I apprised —— of my intention and plan for attacking Ciudad Rodrigo, and him alone, the success of which depends principally upon the length of time during which I can keep it concealed from the enemy. Some Spanish women at Portalegre were apprised of the plan by him, and it must reach the enemy!!! Yet —— is one of the best of them."

Through the correspondence intercepted by the guerillas, Lord Wellington constantly obtained the most valuable information. This was generally contained in letters from the French generals themselves, intended to direct the movements of their colleagues. Although their despatches were written in cipher, the allied leader generally contrived to find out the key which unveiled their contents; and his own secret espionage was even more extensive than the

enemy's. "He had a number of spies amongst the Spaniards who were living within the French lines; a British officer in disguise constantly visited the French armies in the field; a Spanish state-counsellor, living at the headquarters of the first corps, gave intelligence from that side; and a guitar-player of celebrity, named Fuentes, repeatedly making his way to Madrid, brought advice from thence. Mr. Stuart, under cover of vessels licensed to fetch corn from France, kept *chasse marées* constantly plying along the Biscay coast, by which he not only acquired direct information, but facilitated the transmission of intelligence from the land spies, amongst whom the most remarkable was a cobbler, living in a little hutch at the end of the bridge of Irun. This man, while plying his trade, continued for years, without being suspected, to count every French soldier that passed in and out of Spain by that passage, and transmitted their numbers by the *chasse marées* to Lisbon."[1]

Since the preceding December, Lord Wellington had been actively engaged in preparing the necessary means for the investment of Badajoz. Elvas was the grand entrepôt, and there siege stores were collected, and gabions and fascines prepared. The pontoon bridge was also brought forward from Abrantes; and a battering train which had been conveyed by sea and river carriage, in the first place to Alcacer de Sal, was finally transported to the banks of the Guadiana. These preparations, from want of a proper supply of animals of draught, were exceedingly difficult and tedious; and while forage and provisions were scarcely procurable at any price, the military chest of the allied general was dangerously exhausted.

Leaving a division on the Agueda to observe the frontier, Lord Wellington proceeded to Elvas by Villa Velha, where he fixed his headquarters on the 11th of March. The pontoon bridge was thrown across the Guadiana on the

[1] Napier.

15th, and on the same day two flying bridges were established. On the 16th Marshal Beresford passed the river, and invested Badajoz with the third, fourth, and light divisions, and a Portuguese brigade; General Graham, with the fifth, sixth, and seventh divisions, and two brigades of cavalry, marched upon Llerena; while General Hill moved by Merida upon Almendralejoz. These covering armies were intended to prevent a junction between the corps of Soult and Marmont, while the siege should be in progress—the former Marshal being in front of Cadiz—the latter moving by Toledo in the direction of Valladolid.

When Lord Wellington sat down before Badajoz, its garrison consisted of five thousand effective men, under the command of a most distinguished engineer, who had already defended the fortress with success. Since the former siege, Baron Phillipon had strengthened the place by mounting additional guns, retrenching the castle, and securing Fort San Christoval, which he connected by a covered way with the bridge by which the fort and city were united.

Convoys had reached Badajoz on the 10th and 16th of February, and the garrison was amply provisioned. Part of the inhabitants, to avoid the horrors of a siege which they had already twice experienced, voluntarily quitted the place; and such of the remainder as had not a sufficiency of food to maintain their families for three months were forcibly expelled. In powder and shells Phillipon was inadequately provided; for two envoys, which had attempted to bring him a supply, had been threatened by Hill's corps and obliged to return to Seville.

Such was the condition of Badajoz when, limited both in time and means, Lord Wellington determined to attack it. Although his battering train was respectable, and by exertions under which an iron constitution had nearly yielded, a tolerable supply of stores and ammunition had been obtained, still he was unprepared to undertake a formal

siege. Mortars he had none—his miners were few and inexperienced—and if his operations were delayed, an advance of the French armies, or even the stormy weather he might prepare for at the equinox, must certainly interrupt the investment, and render his efforts to reduce Badajoz unavailing.

On the night of the 17th, Lord Wellington broke ground in front of Picurina, within 160 yards of the fort. The tempestuous state of the weather favoured the operation —the workmen were undiscovered by the enemy—and at daybreak the approaches were three feet deep. During the 18th the work continued; the relief improving the parallel, and the garrison, which had been strongly reinforced, keeping up a heavy fire of musketry on the labourers, assisted by frequent discharges from some field-pieces and a howitzer. The fire, however, produced but few casualties; and during the night the parallels were prolonged, and two batteries traced out. On the 19th, while the working parties were busily engaged, 1500 French infantry, and forty horsemen, commanded by General Vielland, issued from the town by the Talavera gate unobserved, and with 100 from Picurina, fell suddenly on the working party in the parallel. Mostly unarmed, and completely taken by surprise, the men were driven from the trench in great confusion; but, being almost immediately rallied by their officers, in turn they charged the French vigorously and repulsed them. The sally caused much alarm; but it was too promptly repelled to occasion any loss more serious than the overturning of the gabions, and a trifling filling in of part of the approaches.

The fighting while it lasted was severe, the French losing above 300 officers and men, and the allies about half that number. Several English officers were taken by the French cavalry, who secured them to their saddles, and attempted to carry them into the town; but the pursuit became so hot,

that they were soon obliged to free themselves from such encumbrances, and consequently, the captives got away. Colonel Flytcher, the commanding engineer, was unfortunately wounded. Although unable to continue a personal superintendence, he possessed Lord Wellington's confidence so highly, that the attack was continued under his direction; and the Commander-in-Chief came every morning to his tent, accompanied by the staff-officers of the day, with the plan of the work executed and in progress, and consulted the colonel on the operations as they proceeded.

From this period of the siege the weather became most severe, and the rain came down in torrents. The labour in the trenches was, consequently, both slowly and painfully executed; and nothing but the best spirit in the troops, united to an ardent zeal in the officers, enabled them to overcome difficulties, from which besiegers less determined would have recoiled. The customary task of excavation was easier far than the other duties entailed upon the working parties. Half the day was consumed in emptying the trenches of rain water; and the bottom became so muddy, that it was found necessary to have it artificially renewed by a layer of sandbags and fascines. Throughout the 22d the rain fell heavily; and at four in the afternoon a torrent came down filling the trenches to an overflow. The floods rose fearfully; the pontoon bridge across the Guadiana was carried away; eleven of the pontoons sunk at their anchors, and the current became so rapid that the flying bridges could with difficulty work. It therefore became a question, if it would be possible to supply the army with provisions, and bring over the guns and ammunition for the attack; and serious apprehensions were entertained that it would be necessary to withdraw from before the place.

But difficulties appeared only to rouse the determination and demonstrate the resources which Lord Wellington so

eminently possessed. By immense exertions the bridge was restored—on the night of the 24th, the breaching batteries were armed—and, at eleven o'clock on the morning of the 25th, the roar of artillery announced that the British guns had opened. After dark that night, the Picurina was carried by storm in the most gallant manner, those of the garrison who were not killed being made prisoners. With the capture of the Picurina, the confusion of the night might have been expected to have terminated—but the garrison, apprehending a general assault, opened a tremendous fire of musketry and cannon, while the clang of the alarm-bell, and the hissing of rockets, increased an uproar which was continued till morning dawned.

The events of the succeeding ten days form but the history of a siege, in which the bold and continued operations of the assailants were opposed by all that science could devise or gallantry effect. Before the crushing fire of the breaching batteries, the solid masonry of the bastions of La Trinidada and Santa Maria gradually gave way; and on the morning of the 5th of April, the engineers reported to Lord Wellington that both breaches were practicable.

The near approach of Marshal Soult, whose advanced guards were already at Llerena, determined the allied General to assault Badajoz that evening. Accordingly, he made a close personal reconnaissance of the breaches; but the commanding engineer having reported that the enemy had retrenched the greater breach, and adopted the most effectual means for an obstinate resistance, Lord Wellington decided on deferring the attack for another day, and during that interval effect a third breach in the old curtain which connected the bastions against which his fire had hitherto been directed. Accordingly, on the morning of the 6th fourteen guns concentrated their fire on the escarp, which they saw to its very base; and by four in the afternoon,

the curtain was beaten down and the breach reported practicable.

The day passed, and every preparation for the assault was completed. The evening was dark and threatening,—twilight came,—the batteries ceased firing,—darkness fell,—and the trenches, though crowded with armed men, remained unusually quiet. Lights were seen occasionally flitting back and forward through the fortress, and the "All's well" of the French sentinels was distinctly heard. While waiting in readiness for the assault, the deep gloom which hitherto had shrouded the beleaguered city was suddenly dissipated by a flight of fireworks, which rose over the town, and displayed every object around it.

The word was given to advance, and the 4th and light divisions issued from the trenches. At that moment the deep bell of the cathedral of St. John struck ten; an unusual silence reigned around, and except the softened footsteps of the storming parties, as they fell upon the turf with military precision, not a movement was audible. A terrible suspense,—a horrible stillness,—darkness,—a compression of the breathing,—the dull and ill-defined outline of the town,—the knowledge that similar and simultaneous movements were making on other points,—the certainty that two or three minutes would probably involve the forlorn hope in ruin, or make it a beacon-light to conquest,—all these made the heart throb quicker, and long for the bursting of the storm, when victory should crown daring with success, or hope and life should end together.

On went the storming parties; and one solitary musket was discharged beside the breach, but none answered it. The third division moved forward, closing rapidly up in columns at quarter distance. The ditch was gained,—the ladders were lowered,—on rushed the forlorn hope, with the storming party close behind them. The divisions were now on the brink of the sheer descent, when a gun boomed

from the parapet. The earth trembled,—a mine was fired,—an explosion,—and an infernal hissing from lighted fusees succeeded,—and, like the rising of a curtain on the stage, in the hellish glare that suddenly burst out around the breaches, the French lining the ramparts in crowds, and the British descending the ditch, were placed as distinctly visible to each other as if the hour were noontide!

The explosion nearly annihilated the forlorn hope and the heads of the storming party. For a moment, astounded by the deafening noise, the supporting troops held back; but as if by a general impulse, some rushed down the ladders which had been lowered to the bottom of the ditch—others leaped boldly in, reckless of the depth of the descent—and while some mistook the face of an unfinished ravelin for the breach, which on gaining was found to be entirely separated from the ramparts, the rest struggled desperately up the breach, only to encounter at the summit a range of sword-blades, framed in beams too massive to be cut through, and secured by iron chains beyond the power of removal.

In this fearful situation, the courage of the assailants assumed a desperation that appears almost incredible: officers and men in fast succession gained the summit only to be shot down; and many perished in vain attempts to force an impassable barrier of bristling sword-blades. "The garrison never appeared intimidated nor to lose their decision and coolness for a moment on any point; for, whilst some were repelling the assailants with their bayonets from the summits of the breaches, others continued to roll down with the greatest precision and effect shells and fire-barrels on the men in the ditch below, and their tirailleurs unceasingly fired with accuracy and steadiness from cuts in the parapets between the points of contention."[1]

[1] "Gathering in dark groups, and leaning on their muskets, the assailants looked up with sullen desperation at the Trinidad, while the enemy, stepping out on the ramparts, and aiming their shots by the

Similar gallant efforts to those above described were frequently repeated to carry the breaches, but the combustibles prepared by the garrison seemed inexhaustible. Each time the assailants were opposed by appalling and destructive explosions, and each time were driven down with a great loss of officers and of the bravest soldiers.

But at other points bravery obtained success, and Badajoz was already carried. The third division crossed the Rivillas, surmounted the castle hill, and under a tremendous fire, planted their ladders. The boldest led the way, and unappalled by a shower of shells and missiles, they gained the parapet. But there the French received them with the bayonet—while, utterly incapable of resistance, they were hurled from the top, and crushed by huge stones and beams which, showered from the walls, destroyed any who survived the fall. Receding a few paces, the assailants formed again —two officers caught up the ladders and the boldest men sprang after. Both reached the parapet unharmed, the assailants swarmed up, a firm footing was gained, and the bayonet did the rest. Too late, a reinforcement detached by Phillipon reached the gate, and a sharp fusilade ensued, in which Colonel Ridge was most unfortunately slain. But the French retired in despair, and the castle remained in the possession of the "fighting third."

Badajoz, on that fearful night, was encircled by men desperately resolute to force their way through the iron defences that opposed them. A heavy fire had been opened on the Pardaleras, the bridge was assailed by the Portuguese, and the more distant bastion of San Vincente was at the same time escaladed by Walker's brigade. After a desperate resistance, the French were driven along the ramparts, each bastion resolutely defended and each as bravely stormed. In carrying the last, General Walker was severely wounded.

light of the fire-balls which they threw over, asked, as their victims fell, *Why they did not come into Badajoz.*"—*Napier.*

A lighted port-fire having alarmed a soldier, he called out loudly that a mine was sprung, and a singular panic arose among troops who but a few minutes before had braved death so recklessly. The whole gave ground, while General Veilland coming up with a French reinforcement, drove the affrighted soldiers along the rampart, and recovered possession of the works to the very bastion of San Vincente. But there, a weak battalion of the 38th had been held in reserve. Retaining their fire until the enemy closed, a shattering volley was delivered, and the regiment cheered and charged. Instantly the routed soldiers rallied—all advanced with renewed confidence—and the French, abandoning the defences, fled into the town, followed by a part of the assailants.

Lord Wellington, previous to the assault, had stationed himself on the left of the Calemon, as the best point from which he could issue future orders for the conduct of the attack. Although the carcasses thrown from the town, by betraying the 3d division to the garrison, had precipitated the attack, with the exception of the 5th division, whose ladders were delayed, all went forward correctly. The town clock announced the marching of the storming parties, and the roar of the artillery told that the conflict had begun. From a height beside the quarries where Lord Wellington and his staff were standing, he saw the outline of the works, and "for a minute, the fireworks thrown from the place showed the columns at the breaches. Darkness followed—stillness more horrible yet—and then the sudden burst of light, as shells and mines exploded. The main breach was literally in a blaze—sheets of fire mounted to the sky, accompanied by a continued roaring of hellish noises, as every villanous combustible was ignited to discover or destroy the assailants.

The wounded came fast to the rear, but they could tell little how matters were progressing. At last, a mounted

officer rode up. He was the bearer of evil tidings—the attack upon the breaches had failed—the majority of the officers had fallen—the men, left without leaders to direct them, were straggling about the ditch, and unless instant assistance was sent the assault must fail entirely. Pale, but thoroughly undisturbed, the British General heard the disastrous communication, and issued orders to send forward a fresh brigade (Hay's) to the breaches. Half an hour passed, and another officer appeared. He came from Picton to say the castle had been carried by escalade, and that the 3d division were safe within the town.

Lord Wellington instantly transmitted orders to hold the castle till the morning, and then blowing down the gates, to sally if necessary, and support a fresh assault. No further attempt to gain the breaches was required—and an officer was despatched to withdraw the columns, which was effected about midnight.

Resistance had ceased on the part of the garrison. Some irregular fighting occurred in the streets, but the intelligence of the capture of the castle at once occasioned an abandonment of the breaches—and Phillipon and Vieland, with part of the garrison, retired to San Christoval, where they surrendered on the first summons in the morning. At daybreak the remnant of the 4th and light divisions entered the breaches unopposed: and Badajoz, after a well-conducted defence, and a last and desperate effort to repulse an assault, fell to no ordinary conqueror.

Would that the story of that siege had ended with its capture; for "now commenced that wild and desperate wickedness which tarnished the lustre of the soldier's heroism. Shameless rapacity, brutal intemperance, savage lust, cruelty and murder, shrieks and piteous lamentations, groans, shouts, imprecations, the hissing of fires bursting from the houses, the crashing of doors and windows, and

the reports of muskets used in violence, resounded for two days and nights in the streets of Badajoz."[1]

On the day of the investment the garrison consisted, by French returns, of 4742 men. About 1200 were rendered *hors de combat* during the siege, and 3500 were made prisoners. The five French battalions in Badajoz had no eagles; but the colours of the garrison, with those of the regiment of Hesse Darmstadt, were taken and transmitted by Lord Wellington to the Prince Regent. The loss of the victors was most severe, for in the siege and storm nearly 5000 men were killed and wounded. Lieut.-Colonel M'Cleod of the 43d, and Major O'Hare of the 95th, died sword in hand in the breaches; and five generals, namely, Picton, Colville, Kempt, Walker, and Bowes, were wounded.

During this memorable siege, 2523 barrels of powder, each containing 90 pounds; 31,861 round shots; 1826 common and spherical 5½ inch shells; and 1659 rounds of grape and case shot were expended. The reduction of Badajoz required 70,000 sandbags, 1200 gabions, 700 fascines, and 1570 entrenching tools. Even a siege cannot be carried on without hard cash, and on this occasion Lord Wellington paid away 3500 dollars!

It was a glorious triumph for the conqueror, and no doubt he felt it such. But glory may be bought too dear, and the most brilliant success is seldom unalloyed, for victory cannot be obtained without a sacrifice. "When the extent of the night's havoc was made known to Lord Wellington, the firmness of his nature gave way for a moment, and the pride of conquest yielded to a passionate burst of grief for the loss of his gallant soldiers."[1] The first care of the victorious general was to apportion buildings for the use of his wounded men, and remove them thither, as speedily as circumstances would permit; and on the second day, finding that riot and drunkenness among the

[1] Napier.

soldiery was unabated, Power's Portuguese brigade was marched in, and the provosts posted in the squares, with discretionary power to punish those whom they found marauding. Order was promptly restored—head quarters removed to the city—the besieging park broken up—the guns and stores returned to Elvas, and the entrenching tools brought to the town. The immediate restoration of the damaged works was next proceeded with; and while his important conquest was placed in an attitude of defence, Lord Wellington allowed a short period of repose to his noble army, to enable it, with renewed vigour, to strain forward in the path of victory.

CHAPTER X.

THE reduction of Rodrigo and Badajoz had opened an extended field for the future operations of the allied leader. A prompt march into Andalusia might have been considered as the first consequence of his recent success, and the fall of Seville would have formed a glorious pendent to the capture of the frontier fortresses. The army was burning for fresh service, and its condition, like its spirit, was admirable—every arm was perfect, the cavalry well-mounted, and the artillery superb. Prudence, however, forbade Lord Wellington from undertaking what he might have so confidently expected to effect. Rodrigo was unprovisioned, its garrison mutinous, and the defences of Badajoz unrepaired. If he followed Soult towards Seville, and withdrew his divisions from the Guadiana, Marmont might fall suddenly on Rodrigo—an effort to which he would be fully equal, as a fresh train of siege artillery was on its way from France, to replace the battering guns taken in Badajoz. Lord Wellington therefore determined to secure the conquests he had already made; but at the same time, and by a different line of operations, achieve every advantage which he might probably have obtained by advancing to Seville.

Having selected the north for his scene of operations,

Lord Wellington's first care was to sever the corps of Soult and Marmont, and interrupt their communications.

Early in June, all was prepared for active operations; and Lord Wellington with the allied army crossed the Agueda on the 13th. To some of the troops the route leading through Rodrigo was interesting; and many indications of "siege and storm" were still apparent.

The weather was fine, and as the route lay principally through forest lands, nothing could be more picturesque and beautiful than the country which the line of march presented. The wooded landscape displayed its verdure under the sunny influence of a cloudless sky, and singularly contrasted its summer green with the snow-topped pinnacles of the Sierra de Gata. No enemy appeared—for days the march was leisurely continued—until, on clearing the forest at Valmasa, the German hussars in advance had a slight skirmish with a French picket. With evening the skirmish closed; the enemy retiring across the Tormes, and the allies bivouacking on its banks, overlooked by a city already venerable from its antiquity, famed as a seat of learning, and which was destined shortly to obtain a different and a more enduring celebrity.

Salamanca stands in a commanding situation on the right bank of the Tormes, a river of considerable magnitude there, which rises near the Sierra de Tablada in Old Castile, and falls into the Douro on the Portuguese frontier, opposite Bemposta. The country round is open, without trees and with a few villages interpersed, in which the houses are constructed of clay. On the left of the river there are extensive pastures, on the right a wide and unclosed corn country. The pastures are common, and the arable land occupied after a manner not usual in other parts of Spain: it is cultivated in annual allotments, and reverts to the commonalty after the harvest.

On the morning of the 17th, the allies crossed the Tormes

by the fords of Santa Martha and Los Cantos; and Lord Wellington entered Salamanca at the head of his victorious troops. Marmont, on the preceding night, had evacuated the city, and with a cavalry corps and two divisions of infantry retreated leisurely to Fuente el Sauco, followed by the allied advanced guard; while, with the exception of Clinton's division, which remained in Salamanca to invest the forts, the whole of the army of Lord Wellington took a position on the Sierra of San Christoval.

In a city of convents and colleges there could be no difficulty in finding buildings equally adapted, as well from their situation as the solidity with which they had been constructed, for being converted into places of defence. Marmont had ruined thirty-five edifices, and fortified with the timber and materials they afforded three convents, of which that of San Vicente was the principal. Placed on a sheer rock which overhung the Tormes, and severed by a deep ravine from other edifices, it had every capability of being rendered formidable, and the French engineers displayed considerable skill in its defence. It was secured in front by palisades, and on the re-entering angle by a fascine battery—while the windows were built up and crenellated, and no pains spared in the application of the necessary labour and materials which could secure it from aggression.

To the sixth division the details of the siege were committed. Ground was broken before San Vicente on the night of the 17th; on the 19th a battery commenced breaching, and with two field pieces placed on the roof of San Bernardo, which overlooked the fort, seven guns were turned on the devoted convent. On the 20th iron howitzers arrived from Elvas, and their fire was added to that previously maintained; but the building appeared unshaken, and its loopholed wall poured forth an incessant tiraillade from every crevice, "when, in a moment, on one discharge of the battery, the wall and roof of the building, with its

numerous inhabitants, were precipitated to the earth with a tremendous crash; a cloud of dust and lime cleared away to exhibit a shapeless heap of ruin; while its brave garrison stationed in that part of the building were buried and invisible in the mass which alone appeared." To increase the confusion of the French, carcasses were thrown in with the design of firing the woodwork of the fort; but the defenders, with amazing determination, succeeded in extinguishing the flames, while they supported an unceasing fusilade, by which the assailants suffered heavily.

On the night of the 23d, the fire of the British guns established on the right bank of the Tormes had made no decisive impression; but as time was invaluable, and Lord Wellington seemed determined to let nothing induce him to move forward until the forts had fallen, an attempt was made to carry the redoubts of Los Cayetanos and La Merced by escalade. The attack failed, and the loss sustained was considerable.

In the meantime Marmont, having collected four divisions and a brigade of cavalry at El Sauco, advanced to relieve his isolated garrisons. On his approach, the allied army, strengthened by a brigade of the fifth division taken from the siege, formed in battle order on the heights of San Christoval; while, for security, the battering guns were moved across the Tormes. The summit of San Christoval was flat, and covered with a luxuriant crop of grain ready for the sickle, and the Tormes swept round the reverse of the position, touching both its flanks. The villages of Villares and Monte Rubio were behind the left of the hill—Cabrerizos on the right—and Christoval, Castillanos, and Moresco in front and at the foot of the ascent. The position was about four miles long, commanding an expanse of country on every side; but it had neither wood nor water, and as the weather was sultry, the troops suffered from the scarcity of both. In the afternoon the French

cavalry manœuvred as if they intended to turn the left of the position, while Marmont advanced with the mass of his army against the right. At night the allied pickets had been forced back; and the French remained in possession of Moresco, and rested on their arms within cannon range of the English divisions.

Lord Wellington, wrapped in his cloak, lay on the ground that night. The period of repose was short, for with the first blush of morning both armies got under arms. All, however, continued quiet until evening, when an affair occurred between the 68th regiment and the French who were posted in the village of Moresco. Throughout the day Marmont had been endeavouring to signalise the forts, and was constantly occupied in reconnoitring Lord Wellington's position.

Having received reinforcements, increasing his army to fully 40,000 men, the French Marshal moved by his left on the 22d, and seized a height which overlooked the right of the allies. To secure a view of the British position, however, was the only advantage he obtained; for on the approach of the seventh division, under Sir Thomas Graham, he retired from the heights, and took a new position two leagues in the rear, his centre being at Aldea Rubia, and his flanks resting on Cabeza Vellosa and Huerta. By this new disposition, Marmont would have had the power of crossing the river, and opening a communication by the left bank with its imprisoned garrisons; but his able antagonist as promptly effected a movement of his troops, and thus obtaining a command of both banks of the Tormes, covered Salamanca completely.

It was Marmont's determination to offer battle on the 28th; but Lord Wellington, having obtained the siege stores he required from Almeida, pressed the forts so vigorously, that they yielded on the 27th. The fall of the forts was communicated to Marmont on the same evening; and he

received intelligence at the same time that Caffarelli's expected reinforcement was delayed. The object for which he had advanced had failed, and it would have been impolitic to abide a battle now; accordingly, he retreated during the night by the roads of Torro and Tordesillas, taking with him the garrison he had placed in the castle of Alba de Tormes.

The reduction of the forts of Salamanca occasioned a considerable loss, for 540 men had been rendered *hors de combat*, from the passage of the Tormes to the fall of San Vicente. When it was ascertained that Marshal Marmont had retired, a Te Deum was performed in the cathedral, at which Lord Wellington, accompanied by a numerous body of the officers of his army, attended. The scene was grand and impressive, the spacious noble building crowded to excess, and the ceremony performed with all the pomp and splendour of Catholic worship. The pealing organ never poured its tones over a more brilliant, varied, or chivalrous audience. To describe the variety of groups would be endless: the eye, wandering through the expanse of the building, could seldom rest twice on objects of similarity, "All the pomp of a great episcopal seat was displayed on the occasion. Contrasted with the sombre dresses of the numerous officiating clergy, the scarlet uniforms of the British were held in relief by the dark Spanish or Portuguese costume. The Spanish peasant, in all the simplicity and cleanliness of his dress, appeared by by the mustached and fierce-looking guerilla; while the numerous mantillas and waving fans of the Spanish ladies attracted attention to the dark voluptuous beauties of Castile. It was an enthusiastic and imposing scene; nor was its least impressive effect produced by the quiet, unassuming presence of the great man who, in the career of his glory, knew that by showing respect to the religious institutions of other countries, he best secured for himself those

feelings which are only to be substantially acquired by deference to the customs of the people having an equal right with ourselves to adopt the persuasion or the forms most congenial to their minds, and most consistent with their conscientious views."[1]

The adulation of "a giddy crowd" had no charms for one whose mind was centered upon objects, from which the evanescent displays of popular approbation could never for a moment distract it. Ordering that the city forts should be razed, and the castle of Alba dismantled, Lord Wellington quitted Salamanca on the evening of the 28th, and on the 29th rejoined the army.

While all in Salamanca evinced that joyous excitement which victory elicits, Lord Wellington was preparing for a greater triumph; and the allied army was already on its march and reached the Guareña on the 30th of June. On the 1st of July it encamped on the Trabancos, and on the 2d crossed the Zapardial, driving the French rear-guard in great confusion over the Tordesillas. The period that intervened from the 3d to the 15th was marked by a few changes of position; but no serious affair took place until the junction of Bonnet's division from the Asturias, with a strong cavalry reinforcement, encouraged Marmont to extend by his right along the banks of the Douro, and occasioning the allies to make a corresponding movement, head-quarters were changed from Rueda to Nava del Rey. On the 16th the French Marshal passed two divisions across the bridge at Tora, and the allied General occupied Fuente la Pena and Canizal, the fourth and light divisions taking a position at Castejon.

At no period of the campaign was the excitement in both armies raised to a greater pitch. The allies were flushed with victory, and confident of fresh success—the enemy, receiving daily an accession to their strength, and burning

[1] Leith Hay.

to wipe away the disgrace attendant upon their recent discomfitures. Marmont courted an action upon ground on which, from its being favourable for defence, he knew that his adversary must attack him at disadvantage—while Wellington, as ardent for a battle, but with a resolution not to be disturbed, refused to throw away a chance, and coolly waited until he could deal a blow that should be decisively effective. No time could be fraught with more military interest than that when the rival armies were in each other's presence on the Douro. "The weather was very fine, the country rich, and the troops received their rations regularly; wine was so plentiful that it was hard to keep the soldiers sober; the caves of Rueda, either natural or cut in the rock below the surface of the earth, were so immense and so well stocked, that the drunkards of two armies failed to make any very sensible diminution in the quantity. Many men of both sides perished in that labyrinth, and on both sides also the soldiers, passing the Douro in groups, held amicable intercourse, conversing of the battles that were yet to be fought; the camps on the banks of the Douro seemed at times to belong to one army, so difficult is it to make brave men hate each other."[1]

The 19th and 20th were passed in marching and manœuvring. Each hour wore away in the belief that the succeeding one would usher in a conflict; and when evening came, and the rival armies bivouacked in the other's presence, the weary soldier, as he stretched himself upon his grassy bed, expected that the morrow's sun would rise upon a battle field. In the reminiscences of a life, while years shall slip away unregarded, those days of glorious excitement will come back with vivid freshness to the memory of him who fought at Salamanca.

What could be more beautiful than the military spectacle which the movement of ninety thousand men, in parallel

[1] Napier.

lines, presented? The line of march was seldom without the range of cannon, and often within that of musketry. When the ground allowed it, the guns on each side occasionally opened. But the cannonade was but partially maintained. To reach a point was Marmont's object—to intercept him was that of Wellington. "The French General moving his army as one man along the crest of the heights, preserved the lead he had taken, and made no mistake;" and the extraordinary rapidity of his marching bore evidence to the truth of Napoleon's observation, that "for his greatest successes he was as much indebted to the legs as he was to the arms of his soldiers."

The morning of the 21st found the allied army on its old position of San Christoval. Marmont having garrisoned the castle of Alba, crossed the Tormes, marched up the valley of Machechuco, and bivouacked in the forest of Calvaraso de Ariba. In the afternoon, Wellington passed the bulk of his army also across the river, leaving the 3d division and a brigade of Portuguese cavalry entrenched upon the right bank of the Tormes.

The march of the 21st was tedious and fatiguing, and before the last of the columns had passed the fords, night had fallen, and a thunder storm of unusual violence came on. Nothing could harbinger a bloody day more awfully than the elemental uproar of the night which preceded that of Salamanca. Crash succeeded crash—and in rapid flashes the lightning played over height and valley, while torrents burst from the riven clouds, and swelled all the streams to torrents. Terrified by the storm, the horses broke away from their picketings, and rushing madly to and fro, added to the confusion. One flash killed several belonging to the 5th Dragoon Guards, and occasioned serious injury to the men in the attempts they made to recover and secure them.

The morning broke sullenly before this uproar ended; and

with the first dawn, the light troops of the enemy commenced skirmishing; while frequent movements of heavy columns, as they marched and countermarched, seemed rather calculated to confuse an opponent, than effect a particular object. On one of two heights, named Arapiles, the allied right was appuied, and the occupation of the other was attempted; but the French, with a similar design, had already detached troops, who succeeded in obtaining its possession. The day wore on,—the late tempest apparently had cleared the atmosphere,—all was bright and unclouded sunshine,—and over a wide expanse of undulating landscape nothing obscured the range of sight but dust from the arid roads, or wreathing smoke occasioned by the spattering fire of the light troops. Marmont was busily manœuvring, and Lord Wellington coolly noticing from a height the dispositions of his opponent, which, as he properly calculated, would lead to a general engagement.

At noon, from the rear of the Arapiles, Marmont made a demonstration, as if his design was to attack the allied left. The movement brought Lord Wellington to the ground; but readily perceiving that it was but a feint of the French Marshal, he returned to his former position on the right.

At two o'clock, finding that his abler antagonist was not to be deceived, Marmont determined to outflank the right of the allies, and interpose between them and the Rodrigo road; and in consequence, commenced marching his columns by their left. This was a fatal movement—and as the French infantry extended, a staff officer announced it to Lord Wellington. One eagle glance satisfied him that the moment for attack was come—a few brief orders passed his lips—and the doom of his rival's army was pronounced.

No conflict had been so long desired, and none more unexpectedly brought on. The baggage of the allied army was moving towards the Rodrigo road; the commissariat

had already retired; evening was coming fast; and still no note of preparation indicated that the storm of battle was about to burst. Marmont, fearing that his cautious opponent would avoid a contest by retreating, hurried his own dispositions to force a battle, and Thomier's division, with his light cavalry and fifty guns, was put in rapid march. The centre columns were debouching from the forest, and Lord Wellington's corresponding movement was to be Marmont's signal to fall on. Suddenly, the inactive masses which hitherto had been resting on the English heights, assumed a threatening attitude. Was it a feint? A few minutes removed that doubt—the allied brigades closed up rapidly on each other—and the third division, in four columns, rushed down the hill, and he who would have been the assailant was assailed!

Unchecked by a furious cannonade, Pakenham crossed the hollow between the high grounds occupied previously by the opposing forces; scattered the light troops who would have stayed his progress; and pressing up the hill, without pausing to deploy, the regiments brought their right shoulders forward in a run, and without halting, formed line from open column. No troops were ever more nobly led; and none advanced under showers of grape, and a heavy *tiraillade*, with more imposing steadiness. The crest was gained. The French line commenced firing, beat the *pas de charge*, and moved forward a few paces; but, undauntedly, Wallace's brigade closed up ranks necessarily disordered by a rapid advance over irregular ground, and all pushed boldly on.

The French, alarmed by this movement, became unsteady, The daring advance of an enemy, whom the concentrated fire of five thousand muskets could not arrest, was indeed astounding. All that brave men could do was done by their officers, as they strove to confirm the courage of their troops, and persuade them to withstand an assault that

threatened their wavering ranks. The colonel of the 22d *legère*, seizing a musket from a grenadier, rushed forward, and mortally wounded Major Murphy of the 88th. Speedily his death was avenged—a soldier shot the Frenchman through the head, who, tossing his arms wildly up, fell forward and expired. The brigade betrayed impatience; and the 88th, excited to madness by the fall of a favourite officer—who passed dead along their front, as his charger galloped off with his rider's foot sticking in the stirrup—could scarcely be kept back. Pakenham marked the feeling, and ordered Wallace "to let them loose." The word was given—down came the bayonets to the charge—the pace quickened—a wild cheer, mingled with the Irish hurra, rent the skies—and unwilling to stand the shock, the French gave ground. The Rangers, and the supporting regiments, broke the dense mass of infantry, bayoneting all whom they could overtake—until, "run to a standstill," they halted to recover breath, and stayed the slaughter.

Marmont, perceiving the error he had committed, endeavoured to redeem it by issuing orders to halt the marching by his left, and hurry on the movement of his centre columns, and thus reconnect his severed line. But at this moment, a howitzer shell shattered his arm, lacerated his side, and obliged him to be carried from the field. Bonet, who succeeded to the command, was also badly wounded; and the task of restoring the fortunes of the day devolved upon Clausel. Thomier had fallen at the head of his division; Foy and Ferry were among the wounded; and thus, the confusion incident to a sudden attack was increased, when the example and exertions of superior officers were most required to arrest the growing disorder, which otherwise threatened to end, as it did, in a general *déroute*.

Although driven from the first height, the French formed on their reserves upon a wooded hill, offering a double front, the one opposed to Pakenham's division, the other

to that of Leith, which, with the Portuguese brigade under Bradford, and a strong cavalry and artillery support, were now coming rapidly into action. The advance of these noble troops, as they crossed the valley under a furious cannonade, was beautiful. A storm of grape fell heavily upon their ranks, but "the men marched with the same orderly steadiness as at first; no advance in line at a review was ever more correctly executed; the dressing was admirable, and spaces were no sooner formed by casualties, than they closed up with the most perfect regularity, and without the slightest deviation from the order of march."[1]

On cresting the height, the enemy were seen in squares, with their front ranks kneeling. They appeared steady and determined; and until the drum rolled, not a shot was heard. Presently the signal was given—a sheet of fire burst from the faces of the squares—and a rolling volley as promptly answered it. This double fire hid the combatants from each other's view; but the English cheer rose wildly as the rattle of the fusilade died away; and next moment a steady array of glittering bayonets cleared the smoke, and the French square was shattered by the charge.

At this crisis, their flank fiercely assailed by Pakenham, and their front broken by Leith, the smoke was succeeded by clouds of dust, and the trample of approaching cavalry was heard. It was Le Marchant's. The rush of horses' feet rose above the din of battle; and that sound, so ominous to broken infantry, announced the final ruin of the French left wing.

Bursting through smoke and dust, the heavy brigade galloped across the interval of ground, between the heights where the third division had made its flank attack, and the fifth its more direct one. Sweeping through a mob of routed soldiers, the brigade rode boldly at the three battalions of the French 66th, which, formed in supporting

[1] Leith Hay.

lines, endeavoured to check the advance of the allies, and afford time for the broken divisions to have their organisation restored. Heedless of its searching fire, the British dragoons penetrated and broke the columns; and numbers of the French were sabred, while the remainder were driven back upon the third division and made prisoners. Still pressing on, another regiment in close order presented itself; this too was charged, broken, and cut down.

Although this brilliant attack had disordered the formation of the brigade, still the heavy cavalry rode gallantly at new opponents, and under a fire from which horsemen less resolute would have recoiled, they broke a third and stronger column, and seized and secured five pieces of artillery. Nothing could arrest their headlong career. Their noble commander, Le Marchant, had already fallen, fighting at their head; but leaders were not wanting; Cotton and Somerset were foremost in the front of battle; wounds were unheeded; and men attached to other arms of the service, carried away by a chivalrous enthusiasm, were seen charging with the heavy dragoons, and engaged in the thickest of the *mêlée*.

With the ruin of the French left wing, the struggle might have been expected to have terminated, and victory certain; but while the right of the allies, by its impetuous charges, had swept away all that opposed its advance, the battle was raging in the centre, and the fortune of the day for a brief time wavered. Against that Arapiles, which had been occupied by a French battalion and a battery of guns, Pack's Portuguese brigade was detached; while the fourth division, under General Cole, simultaneously attacked Bonet's corps, with a vigour which promised a successful result. But Pack's assault failed totally. The Portuguese regiments recoiled; and after the gallant exertions of their officers had been used in vain, the attack was abandoned, and the height left in possession of the enemy.

Nothing could be more unfortunate than this repulse. Unassailed themselves, the French turned their musketry and guns upon the flank and rear of the fourth division, now completely exposed to their fire; while Bonet, remarking the failure of Pack's attack, rallied his retreating battalions, and in turn, becoming the assailant, drove back the British regiments. From the Arapiles a murderous fire was maintained; showers of grape fell thickly on the retiring division; men and officers dropped fast; and although Marshal Beresford, with a Portuguese brigade, came promptly to the assistance of the hard-pressed fourth, the French gathered both strength and courage—for numbers of their companions, derouted on the left, joined their companions in the centre, while Boyer's heavy cavalry moved forward to support an advance which promised to end in victory. At this dangerous crisis the confusion was increased by the loss of the commanding officers; for both Cole and Beresford were wounded, and carried from the field.

Lord Wellington marked the emergency, and ordered Clinton's division to advance. This fine and unbroken corps, numbering 6000 bayonets, pushed rapidly forward, confronted the victorious enemy, who, with loud cheers, were gaining ground on every point, as the hard-pressed fourth division was driven back by overwhelming numbers. Bonet, determined to follow up his temporary success, met Clinton's division manfully. For a time neither would give ground—a close and furious conflict resulted—while the ceaseless roll of musketry, and the thunder of fifty guns, told how furiously the battle-ground was disputed. Both fought desperately, and though night was closing, the withered grass, blazing on the surface of the hill, threw an unearthly glare upon the combatants, and displayed the alternations that attended the "heady fight." But the British bayonet, at last, opened the path to victory. Such

a desperate encounter could not endure. The French began to waver, the sixth division cheered, pushed forward, gained ground, while, no longer able to withstand an enemy who seemed determined to sweep everything from before it, the French retired in confusion, leaving the hard-contested field in undisputed possession of the island conquerors.

Besides the capture of seventeen pieces of cannon, and nearly one thousand sick and wounded men at Valladolid, the French had sustained other and severe losses during the recent operations. The guerillas, under Marquinez, made 300 prisoners — Tordesillas surrendered to Santo Cildes—while, alarmed by the movements of the Gallician army which, in obedience to Lord Wellington's directions, had passed the Douro, and reached the Zapardiel, Clausel gave up the line of the former river, while Joseph, after dismantling the castle, forcing a contribution, and robbing the churches of their plate, abandoned Segovia, and retired through the passes of the Guaderama—thus separating his own army from that of Portugal, and leaving the approaches to the capital open to the advance of the allies.

Salamanca, whether considered in its military or moral results, was, probably, the most important of all the Peninsular triumphs. It was a decisive victory—and yet its direct advantages fell infinitely short of what Lord Wellington might have been warranted in expecting. How much more fatal must it not have proved, had night not shut in and robbed the victor of half the fruits of conquest. The total demolition of the French left was effected by six o'clock, and why should the right attack have not been equally successful? Had such been the case, in what a hopeless situation the broken army must have found itself! The Tormes behind, and a reserve of three entire divisions, who during the contest had scarcely drawn a trigger, ready to assail in front—nothing could have averted total ruin; and to the French, Salamanca would have proved the

bloodiest field on record. Even had the Castle of Alba been defended, that darkness which permitted Clausel to withdraw his routed divisions, and carry off guns and trophies whose loss was otherwise inevitable, would have but added to the confusion, and increased the difficulty of retreating in the presence of an unbroken army; and consequently, the ruin of the French must have been consummated before assistance could have reached them, and those arms effected a junction, by which they were enabled to outmarch their pursuers, preserve their communications, and fall back upon their reserves.

Still the moral results of the battle of Salamanca were manifold. That field removed for ever the delusory belief of French superiority; and the enemy fatally discovered that they must measure strength with opponents in every point their equals. The confidence of wavering allies was confirmed; while the evacuation of Madrid, the abandonment of the siege of Cadiz, the deliverance of Andalusia and Castile from military occupation, and the impossibility of reinforcing Napoleon during his northern campaign, by sparing troops from the corps in the Peninsula—all these important consequences arose from Marmont's defeat upon the Tormes.

Having obtained supplies from the rear, Lord Wellington resumed his operations on the 6th of August, marching on the capital by the route of Segovia. In the beautiful village of San Ildefonso—which place the allies reached on the 8th—Lord Wellington rested his troops for a day, and allowed the right to close up, preparatory to entering the passes of the Guadarama. On the 10th, the entire army crossed the mountains unopposed—Joseph Buonaparte, after a reconnaisance with Marshal Jourdan, having detached a strong force to escort his crowded court, which on that morning had abandoned the capital, forming a convoy of 3000 carriages and 20,000 people.

On the evening of the 11th the adherents of the pseudo king in the greatest confusion hurried from the capital. At noon next day the advanced guards of the allies entered the city amid the acclamations of the populace; and never did a delivering army receive a more enthusiastic reception. On the 13th Don Carlos d'Espana was nominated governor of the province and capital, and a new constitution was proclaimed.

The position of Lord Wellington might now have been considered as one of pride and promise. A succession of brilliant operations had ended with the possession of Madrid—an event in itself forming a brilliant epoch in Peninsular history. It told that Wellington held a position and possessed a power, that in England many doubted, and more denied; and those, whose evil auguries had predicted a retreat upon the shipping, and finally an abandonment of the country, were astounded to find the allied leader victorious in the centre of Seville, and dating his general orders from the palace of the Spanish kings. The desertion of his capital by the usurper, proclaimed the extent of Welington's success; and proved that his victories were not, as had been falsely asserted at home, "conquests but in name."

And yet never had Lord Wellington's situation been more insecure than at this bright but deceptive era. At the opening of the campaign, the fertility of the country enabled his antagonist to command every necessary for his subsistence; for all that his army required was exacted with unscrupulous severity. The allied General had no such resources to rely upon. The British Government would not, even in an enemy's territories, carry on war upon so inhuman and iniquitous a system; but it exposed its army to privations, and its General to perplexities and difficulties, which might have paralysed any weaker mind than Lord Wellington's, by the parsimony with which it apportioned his means. When he advanced from Sala

manca, there were but 20,000 dollars in the military chest. the harvest was abundant, but how was bread to be obtained without money?—and the same want would be felt in bringing his supplies from Ciudad Rodrigo, and other places in the rear of that fortress; the very difficulty of removing his wounded to the frontier of Portugal being sufficient to deter him from seeking an action on the Douro.

Wellington, however, seized and obtained the opportunity. He had fought and won a glorious battle; but how far his situation was relieved by a great victory, a brief extract from his correspondence with the British minister will best determine. "I likewise request your lordship not to forget horses for the cavalry and the artillery, and money. *We are absolutely bankrupt.* The troops are now five months in arrears, instead of being one month in advance. The staff have not been paid since February; the muleteers not since June, 1811; and we are in debt in all parts of the country. I am obliged to take the money sent to me by my brother for the Spaniards, in order to give my own troops a fortnight's pay, who are really suffering for want of money."

In the capital he found nothing but misery and want. The iron grasp of the usurper had wrung from a once proud city, not only the means by which an ally could be succoured, but those that were necessary for their own existence and support. But yet the wild enthusiasm that hailed him when he appeared might have intoxicated a weaker minded conqueror. The blessings of the people accompanied him wherever he went. The municipal authorities gave a bull-fight in his honour, and when he appeared in the royal box, the air rung with the repeated shouts of not less than 12,000 spectators. "He could not walk abroad by daylight because of the pressure of the multitudes who gathered round him; even in the dark, when he went into the Prado, though he and his suite were dressed in blue greatcoats in hopes of escaping notice, they were generally recognised and fol-

lowed by crowds, the women pressing to shake hands, and some even to embrace them."[1] But this was that hollow and idle exultation, which expends itself in noisy ebullitions, and leads to no important results—and the intuitive quickness of Lord Wellington saw how valueless were the professions of the Spaniards.

Could honours have compensated for annoyances, the allied General would have had no reason to complain.[2] One wise proceeding emanated from the Cortes—for Lord Wellington was declared generalissimo of the Spanish armies, and the regency conferred upon him the order of the golden fleece—the collar of that order which had belonged to the Infante being presented to him by the daughter of Don Luiz, D. Maria Teresa de Bourbon. From his own prince, the conqueror of Madrid obtained a high mark of approbation—and his arms received a royal augmentation, namely, "in the dexter quarter, an escutcheon, charged with the crosses of St. George, St. Andrew, and St. Patrick, *being the Union badge of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland*, as a lasting memorial of the glorious and transcendent achievements of the said Arthur Marquis of Wellington, on various important occasions, but more particularly in the recent brilliant and decisive victory obtained over the French army by the troops under his command, near Salamanca, on the 22d day of July last; such royal augmentation being first duly exemplified according to the laws of arms, and recorded in the Herald's College."

[1] Southey.

[2] During that year (1812) he had been created Duque de Ciudad Rodrigo, and advanced in the British Peerage, by the title of Earl of Wellington—the Parliament having added their thanks, and voted £2000 per annum for the support of the dignity conferred. To these honours the Prince Regent of Portugal annexed that of Marquez of Torres Vedras—and subsequently, the higher, and it would appear, prophetic title, of Duque da Victoria.

CHAPTER XI.

WHEN intelligence reached Lord Wellington that Clausel had come down the valley of the Pisuerga,—the first, fifth, and seventh British divisions, two Portuguese brigades (Pack's and Bradford's), the German heavy cavalry, and Anson's light brigade, were directed by rapid marches on Arevalo; and, on the 1st of Sept. (1812) he left the capital, and assumed the command. On the 6th, the allied army forded the Douro, and reached Valladolid on the 7th; Clausel having abandoned that city on the preceding evening. Hoping that Castaños would join him as he had promised, Lord Wellington halted during the 8th, while the French leisurely fell back through the valleys of Pisuerga and Arlanzon.

The line of march by which Clausel retreated, and Lord Wellington advanced, was equally picturesque and fruitful. In patriarchal wealth, no valleys on the Peninsula were richer: for everywhere an abundance of corn, wine, and oil was found. To an advancing army these supplies were most valuable; and to a retreating one, this route gave great facilities of defence. The enclosures, so frequent in a highly cultivated district, presented continued obstacles to the march of the allies: while numerous ridges crossed the valleys, and with their flanks appuyed upon the mountains

which rose boldly on either side, afforded at every mile a position that could be vigorously defended. Of these local advantages Clausel availed himself, "and baffled his great adversary in the most surprising manner. Each day he offered battle, but on ground which Wellington was unwilling to assail in front, partly because he momentarily expected the Gallicians up, but chiefly because of the declining state of his own army from sickness, which, combined with the hope of ulterior operations in the south, made him unwilling to lose men. By flank movements he dislodged the enemy; yet each day darkness fell ere they were completed, and the morning's sun always saw Clausel again in position. At Cigales and Dueñas, in the Pisuerga valley; at Magoz, Torquemada, Cordobilla, Revilla, Vallejera, and Pampliega in the valley of the Arlanzon; the French General thus offered battle, and finally covered Burgos on the 16th, by taking the strong position of Cellada del Camino.[1]

At last, however, his tardy ally came up, and on the 17th the Spanish corps of 12,000 men joined Lord Wellington. To force on a battle was now the great object of the English General; but Clausel, observing that his opponent had been largely reinforced, with excellent discretion declined an action, and retreated to Frandovinez. On the following night he retired through the town of Burgos, having been joined by Caffarelli, who had completed the necessary preparations for defending the castle. Both generals fell back to Briviesca, where a reserve, organised especially by Napoleon, and intended to remedy any disaster which might befal the army of Portugal, united itself with the French corps.

When the advanced guards of the allies entered Burgos, the city was in the greatest confusion. The French had fired some houses which would have covered the approaches

[1] Napier.

of a besieging army; and the Partidas, intent only on plunder, were marauding in all directions. Fortunately the flames were arrested, and the guerillas restrained by the exertions and influence of Carlos d'España; and, by the arrival of Lord Wellington, order was completely restored.

On the 19th of September the castle was regularly invested, and the duties of the siege entrusted to the first and sixth divisions, with the brigades of Pack and Bradford. On being closely reconnoitred, the defences were found to occupy an oblong, conical hill, and to be of a triple nature nearly all round. The lower or outer line consisted of the old escarp wall of the town or castle, modernised with a shot-proof parapet, and planks ingeniously procured by means of palisades, or tambours, at the salient and re-entering points. The second line was of the nature and profile of a field retrenchment, and well palisaded. The third, or upper line, was nearly of a similar construction to the second, and on the most elevated point of the cone, the primitive keep had been formed into an interior retrenchment, with a modern heavy casemated battery named after Napoleon.

Until the night of the 22d, the operations of the siege were vigorously continued; the garrison maintaining a heavy fire of shot and shells upon the working parties. Anxious, therefore, to abridge the attack, Lord Wellington decided on carrying the exterior defences of the castle by escalade, and then form a lodgment on the wall; and that night the assault was given. Major Laurie of the 79th, with detatchments from the different regiments before the place, formed the storming party. The Portuguese, who led the attack, were quickly repulsed; and though the British entered the ditch, they never could mount a ladder. Those who attempted it were bayoneted from above, while shells, combustibles, and cold shot were hurled on the assailants, who, after a most determined effort for a quarter of

an hour, were driven from the ditch, leaving their leader, and half the number who composed the storming party, killed and wounded.

After this discouraging failure an attempt was made to breach the walls; but the more commanding fire of the castle disabled the few guns placed by the engineers in battery; and nothing remained but to resort to the slower but more certain method by sap and mine.

The assault (Oct. 4th) met the success that it so well deserved. The mine was sprung at five o'clock, and its effect was ruinous; the wall came down in masses—the explosion shattering the masonry for nearly one hundred feet, and blowing up many of the garrison. "The assault was conducted with the greatest regularity and spirit. In an instant the advanced party were on the ruins; and, before the dust created by the explosion had subsided, were in contact with the defenders on the summit of the breach. The party to assault the breach were equally regular and equally successful; and, after a struggle of a few minutes, the garrison were driven into their new covered-way, and behind their pallisades."[1]

The remainder of the siege may be compressed into general occurrences. Lord Wellington, from the enormous expenditure of musket cartridges, which his weakness in artillery had rendered unavoidable, felt it necessary to change his system of attack; and while the white church was assailed with hot shot, a gallery was commenced against that of San Roman. The former operation failed—the latter, however, was continued with better success. The old breach in the second line was cleared again by the fire from the horn-work. A new one, on the 18th, was declared practicable; and Lord Wellington determined to storm them both, while a strong detachment was to escalade the

[1] Journal of the Sieges.

front of the works, and thus connect the attacks upon the breaches. At half-past four in the evening, a flag was displayed on a hill west of the castle, as a signal that the mine was sprung. The troops instantly rushed to the breaches—and both were carried most gallantly. The guards escaladed the second line; and some of the German legion actually gained the third. But the supports did not come up as promptly as they should; and the French governor, with a powerful reserve, rushed from the upper ground, drove the assailants beyond the outer line, and cleared the breaches. No troops could have fought more gallantly than the storming parties; but numbers prevailed over valour, and the attack consequently failed. The allied loss on this unfortunate occasion was severe. The explosion of the mines had destroyed the greater part of the church of San Roman, and the assailants effected a lodgment among the ruins; but the following night the enemy sallied, drove out the picket, and for a short time obtained possession of the building.

The ruins were once more cleared of the enemy, and a gallery commenced from the church against the second line—but the siege was virtually at an end. The troops had been gradually drawn to the front, in consequence of threatening movements of the French army,—and on the 20th, Lord Wellington gave the command of the investing force to Major-General Pack, and joined the divisions which hitherto had covered the operations against the castle. On the evening of the 21st an official order was given to raise the siege. And thus a general of consummate abilities, and a victorious army, were obliged to retire unsuccessfully from before a third-rate fortress, "strong in nothing but the skill and bravery of the governor and his gallant soldiers," after—the casualties which occurred between the 18th and 21st being included—sustaining a total loss of 509 officers and men killed, and 1505 wounded or

missing; a loss in numbers nearly equalling the garrison of the place.

The position of Lord Wellington, when the French army advanced from Briviesca, was certainly the most dangerous of any in which he had been previously, or indeed, was subsequently placed. His whole force consistèd of 21,000 Anglo-Portuguese, 11,000 Spanish regulars, and the guerilla cavalry of Julian Sanchez and Marquiñez. The British and German horsemen were under two thousand five hundred sabres; and the artillery, including twelve ill-appointed Spanish guns, numbered but forty-two pieces, and these of an inferior calibre. The French army were all good soldiers, and exceeded the allies by twelve thousand men; while in those important arms, cavalry and artillery, they were immeasurably superior, as Souham had more than sixty guns, and five thousand admirable horsemen. In offering battle, Lord Wellington had not only stronger numbers to contend against, but his local position was most dangerous; while the spirit of his army, from recent reverses, had become depressed, and even its discipline had declined. Intelligence, however, reached the allied general on the 20th that decided him not only on refusing to abide an action, but also upon raising the siege. Joseph was advancing towards the Tagus, that river had become in many places fordable, and was consequently insecure; the fall of Chinchilla had opened the road from Valencia; while by the treachery of Ballasteros, La Mancha was undefended, and the surrounding country and its resources consequently left for Soult to deal with as he pleased. To secure a junction with Hill was now become a measure of imperious necessity—a retreat was unavoidable—and to be successful it must be promptly and rapidly effected.

On the last day of the retreat, when the allies fell back from the Huebra to Rodrigo, the broken surface of a country, "flat, marshy, and scored with water-gullies,"

rendered the recession of the columns without loss or confusion a very delicate operation. Lord Wellington had made the necessary arrangements to effect his object; and Napier records the following singular but characteristic occurrence, which the orders of the allied general produced:

"Knowing that the most direct road was impassable, he had directed the divisions by another road, longer, and apparently more difficult; this seemed such an extraordinary proceeding to some general officers, that, after consulting together, they deemed their commander unfit to conduct the army, and led their troops by what appeared to them the fittest line of retreat! Meanwhile, Wellington, who had, before daylight, placed himself at an important point on his own road, waited impatiently for the arrival of the leading division until dawn, and then suspecting something of what had happened, galloped to the other road, and found the would-be commanders stopped by that flood which his arrangements had been made to avoid. The insubordination and the danger to the whole army were alike glaring, yet the practical rebuke was so severe and well-timed, the humiliation so complete, and so deeply felt, that, with one proud sarcastic observation, indicating contempt more than anger, he led back the troops and drew off all his forces safely. However, some confusion and great danger still attended the operation; for even on this road one water-gully was so deep that the light division, which covered the rear, could only pass it man by man over a felled tree; and it was fortunate that Soult, unable to feed his troops a day longer, stopped on the Huebra with his main body, and only sent some cavalry to Tamames. Thus the allies retired unmolested."

With this occurrence, the difficulties of the retreat terminated,—the French desisting from their pursuit, and the allies reaching the high grounds near Rodrigo, which afforded plenty of fuel for their bivouacs, while ample

supplies were forwarded from the city for their use. Immediate assistance was despatched to succour sick or wounded men who had straggled from the line of march; and the British light cavalry and guerillas of Julian Sanchez succeeded in recovering fifteen hundred of these wanderers, who had escaped the enemy's patrols, and were perishing in the woods from cold and hunger. Headquarters were established at Ciudad Rodrigo on the 20th, and part of the allied army cantoned in the surrounding villages, and along the banks of the Agueda; while Hill was detached with a strong corps and the Spanish division of Penne Villemur into Estremadura.

Four months of continued operations had occasioned enormous losses both to the allies and the enemy. But though in total amount the French might have been considerably greater, their numbers had never deteriorated, for their casualties were more than replaced by the reinforcements which continually joined them. With the allies the case was different; for the troops sent out from England bore no proportion to those expended in the recent contest. In the opening of the campaign the balance was heavily against the French; and from the advance across the Douro, on the 18th of July, until they repassed that river, on the 30th, their loss had exceeded fourteen thousand men, while that of the allies was under six thousand. But from the time that Burgos was invested until the Huebra was crossed, the allied casualties, occasioned chiefly by the drunkenness and insubordination of the soldiery, rose fearfully above the enemy's; as during the operations of the double retreat, on a moderate computation, eight thousand men were killed, wounded, or made prisoners.

CHAPTER XII.

LORD WELLINGTON having disposed of his army in the best quarters he could obtain, turned his chief attention to the organisation of an effective force, with which he designed to take the field, and as early in the ensuing spring as green forage could be procured for the cavalry. From England, he had the most encouraging assurances that all necessary supplies and reinforcements should be sent out without delay; and hence, he might calculate with certainty, on being able within a few months to collect the most imposing British force, which had as yet appeared on the Peninsula.

Owing to the measures adopted by himself, and the assistance he received from home, in April 1813, Lord Wellington had under his command 200,000 fighting men, which, taken as a whole, was the finest force that ever Britain had embattled. Its *matériel* was truly magnificent, for abundant supplies and powerful reinforcements had arrived from England. The Life and Horse Guards had joined the cavalry; and that arm, hitherto the weakest, was increased to nineteen efficient regiments. The infantry had been recruited from the militias—the artillery was complete in every requisite for the field—and a well-arranged commissariat, with ample means of transport, facilitated the ope-

rations of the most serviceable force that had ever been placed under the leading of an English general.

The plan of the allied general was a splendid military conception. Aware that the defences of the Douro had been strengthened, he determined to avoid the danger and delay which would be required in forcing them; and by a fine combination of the Anglo-Portuguese army with that of Galicia, he gained the northern bank of the river, taking in reverse the line of defensive posts on the Douro, and opening to attack the whole right flank of the French army, whose scattered corps were too loosely cantoned to admit of rapid concentration. "Thus seventy thousand Portuguese and British, eight thousand Spaniards from Estremadura, and twelve thousand Galicians,—that is to say, ninety thousand fighting men, would be suddenly placed on a new front, and marching abreast against the surprised and separated masses of the enemy, would drive them in flight to the Pyrenees. A grand design, and grandly it was executed! For high in heart and strong of hand Wellington's veterans marched to the encounter; the glories of twelve victories played about their bayonets, and he the leader felt so proud and confident, that in passing the stream which marks the frontier of Spain, he rose in his stirrups, and waving his hand, cried out, 'Farewell, Portugal!'"[1]

Unable to arrest the progress of an army too powerful and too well combined to be checked, Joseph had no alternative but to fall back and leave that capital for ever, to which he had so long held with culpable tenacity. Napoleon had urged him repeatedly to send away his heavy baggage, and remove everything that would impede the abandonment of Madrid; but his advice had been disregarded. The Emperor had also directed that Burgos should be strengthened and provisioned; but the place was unpro-

[1] Napier.

vided with magazines, and the new works which had been commenced were not only incomplete, but, as they commanded the old defences, the castle could not hold out four hours. Hence it was determined that the French corps should fall back behind the Ebro, and the artillery and stores previously collected in the depôts of Madrid, Burgos, and Valladolid, were ordered to be hastily removed to Vittoria, whither the court of the intruders and the Spaniards, who had attached themselves to his cause, were also directed to proceed.

On June 13th, the allied army was put in march to gain the sources of the Ebro. The Galicians, with the British left wing, crossed the river next day, by the bridges of Rocamunde and San Martin. The centre followed on the 15th —while Sir Rowland Hill passed the right wing over by the Puente de Arenas. Thus the French were suddenly cut off from the sea-coast, and their immediate evacuation of all the ports, excepting Santona and Bilbao, was the result. Portugal no longer was to be the depôt for Wellington's supplies; a new base of operations was obtained, and the Tagus was abandoned for the sea-coast of Biscay.

The astonishment of the enemy was indescribable, when, on the evening of the 18th, information reached their headquarters, announcing the astounding intelligence, that the whole of the allied divisions were established on the left bank of the Ebro! The bold and successful operations of the allied general had now seriously endangered the position of the French armies, and, as usual, the generals were at variance in their opinions regarding the course which Joseph should adopt. The king, however, still reckoned on being strengthened by Causel, or by the remainder of Foy's corps, of which Sarrut's division had already joined—and unwilling to abandon his immense convoys, he adopted the fatal resolution of retreating on Vittoria.

On the evening of the 19th, the city of Vittoria presented

a scene of indescribable confusion, in which alarm and display were singularly blended. Joseph, with his staff and guards, the whole of his court, and the headquarters of the army of the centre, accompanied by an endless collection of equipages, intermingled with cavalry, artillery, and their numerous ambulances, occupied the buildings and crowded the streets. An unmanageable mass of soldiers and civilians were every moment increased by fresh arrivals, all vainly seeking for accommodation in a town unequal to afford a shelter for half their number.

Although Joseph nominally commanded the united armies, to Marshal Jourdan, and the generals of divisions under him, the dispositions for the battle were entrusted. The position selected by Marshal Jourdan was generally strong, and well chosen to effect the objects for which he risked a battle, still it had one material defect—its great extent would permit many simultaneous efforts to be made by an attacking army; and accordingly, the allied leader, with admirable skill, availed himself of this advantage.

In numerical strength, the advantage was with Lord Wellington; in military composition, it remained with Joseph Buonaparte. Deducting the sixth division left at Medina del Pombar, the allies had 60,000 Anglo-Portuguese, with 20,000 Spanish troops upon the field. Of this force 10,000 were cavalry; and the artillery had 90 pieces of cannon. The French were inferior by 10,000; but in cavalry, they were stronger; and in artillery, superior by sixty pieces. As an army, nothing could be more perfect—the variety of colour and costume forming a striking contrast to the simpler uniforms of the allies. But the appearance of the whole was soldierly—the cavalry was superb—the guns, caissons, and their appointments were perfect—and the horses, attached to every arm, in excellent condition.

Before day, on the morning of the 21st, the French army

was in position, and the British and their auxiliaries were in march to attack it.

From a gentle eminence in front of Arinez, the whole array of Joseph's army was visible; and on that height the allied staff were collected. There, Lord Wellington was standing, dressed plainly in a grey frock coat, with nothing to mark commanding rank, excepting a Spanish sash and the hat and feathers of a field officer. His telescope at one moment wandered over the extensive position occupied by the enemy, and the next, turned with fixed earnestness upon that point from whence he expected the crash of battle was to burst. The spattering fire of the French light troops opened from the side of the mountain, while Morillo's corps, debouching from the woods that clothed the bottom of the Sierra, brought on a heavy and sustained fire, which announced that the heights were boldly attacked and as obstinately defended. The Spanish efforts to carry them were brave, but unsuccessful. The fusilade continued, and the enemy remained unshaken. In a few minutes more, the smoke-wreaths which had risen steadily over the summit of the mountain, gradually commenced receding—and Cadogan's brigade moving along the ridge, was seen advancing with that imposing steadiness which ever gives assurance of success. The hill was won—but, alas! on its summit lay their chivalrous leader; and till the haze of death had closed his sight, there, at his own request, he remained to "look his last" upon the battle. For a long time the fight was doubtful, as on each side reinforcements came into action. But when Hill, clearing the defile of La Puebla, seized the village of Subijana de Alava, the enemy's repeated efforts to win back their lost ground, though vigorously continued, proved unavailing.

Meanwhile, on the extreme left Graham's artillery was faintly heard, and told that there also the conflict had begun, while the light division, under the guidance of a peasant,

crossed the Zadorra by Tres Puentes, and boldly established itself under a crested height on which the French line of battle had been formed. Before the bridge of Nanclaus, the fourth division was waiting until the third and seventh should arrive. Presently, Picton and Lord Dalhousie appeared, and the whole of the allied columns moved rapidly to their respective objects of attack. The third division crossed the river by the bridge of Mendoza and a ford—the seventh, with a light brigade, followed closely—the fourth division was already on the other side—Hill was pushing the enemy back—and on the left the thunder of his guns redoubled, and showed that Graham was advancing rapidly into action.

The subsequent advance of the allied columns against the enemy's right centre was beautifully executed, as, in echelons of regiments, it crossed that hallowed ground on which tradition placed the chivalry of England, when the Black Prince delivered battle to Henry the Bastard, and by a decisive victory replaced Don Pedro on the throne. As if animated by some glorious impulse, the battalions advanced, "not to combat but to conquer." Colville's brigade of "the fighting third" led the attack, and the first enemy's corps that confronted it was gallantly defeated.

The day was evidently with the allies; but the French, covered by a swarm of skirmishers and the fire of fifty guns, retired on their reserves, which were posted in front of Gomecha. The village of Arinez became now the scene of a desperate conflict, and from its importance, this advanced post was desperately maintained. Checked in his assault, after having seized three pieces of artillery and a howitzer, Picton returned lion-like to the charge, and with the 45th and 74th regiments, drove the French at the bayonet's point fairly through the village. Defeated thus in front, and their left flank turned at Subijana de Alava, the wreck

of the armies of the south and centre made a last stand between the villages of Ali and Armentia, while that of Portugal still bravely maintained itself on the upper Zadorra. But this final struggle was succeeded by a total deroute. The left wing of the allies was furiously engaged; and the heights of Abechuco, the village of the same name, and the bridge at Gamarra Mayor, were all successively attacked, and all carried in splendid style after being desperately defended. The contest now was ended—the southern and central armies were seen in full retreat by the road on the right of Vittoria leading towards Salvatierra—the allies were advancing on every point—momently, the enemy's confusion increased—the guns were abandoned, and the drivers and horses went off at speed. The soldiers pressed wildly through a road already choked with the refugees from the capital, and the countless vehicles which accompanied their flight—and a scene of indescribable disorder ensued.

Night closed upon the victors and the vanquished—and darkness and broken ground favoured the escape of battalions flying from the field in mob-like disorder, and incapable of any resistance had they been overtaken and attacked. Two leagues from Vittoria the pursuit was abandoned—but the horse-artillery, while its fire could reach the fugitives, continued to harass the retreat by a discharge of shells and round shot. Reluctantly, Lord Wellington returned to the city, which he entered about nine in the evening. Two nights before, Vittoria displayed a blaze of light in honour of King Joseph's presence: now all betrayed panic and confusion—every door was closed—every lattice darkened—while a solitary lantern placed in front of each house, gave to the streets a sombre and mournful appearance.

A year destined to witness the most glorious displays of England's bravery as the tide of conquest flowed on in a series of unchecked success, brought to Lord Wellington a

well-deserved addition to his honours. On the 1st of January, 1813, he was gazetted to the colonelcy of the royal regiment of Horse Guards, and on the 4th of March, elected a Knight of the Garter. On the 22d of July the Cortes proposed, and the Regency offered, the fine estate of Soto de Roma in Granada, to the commander of their armies, "in the name of the Spanish nation, and in testimony of its sincere gratitude." But from his own Sovereign a higher honour was conferred upon the conqueror of Vittoria—and that flattering distinction was intimated to the allied general in the graceful manner that might have been expected from one who had been pronounced "the most polished gentleman in Europe:"—

"CARLTON HOUSE, 3*d July* 1813.

"MY DEAR LORD,

"Your glorious conduct is beyond all human praise, and far above my reward. I know no language the world affords worthy to express it. I feel I have nothing left to say, but devoutly to offer up my prayer of gratitude to Providence, that it has, in its omnipotent bounty, blessed my country and myself with such a General. You have sent me, among the trophies of your unrivalled fame, the staff of a French Marshal, and I send you in return that of England.

"The British army will hail it with enthusiasm, while the whole universe will acknowledge those valorous efforts which have so imperiously called for it.

"That uninterrupted health and still increasing laurels may continue to crown you through a glorious and long career of life, are the never ceasing and most ardent wishes of, my dear Lord, your very sincere and faithful friend,

"G. P. R.

"Field Marshal the Marquis of Wellington, K.G.'

Although San Sebastian had been neglected by the French previous to the battle of Vittoria, that unexpected defeat at once rendered the fortress an object of paramount importance. Upwards of three thousand were now collected for its defence. Seventy-six heavy guns were mounted on the works, and subsequently, more reached the fortress by sea. Indeed, so imperfect was the coast blockade that the French not only received supplies, but were enabled to send off their wounded men, and both were unmolested by the British cruisers.

Circumstances, however, besides a scarcity of ammunition, obliged Lord Wellington to substitute a blockade for a siege. Soult, who had been directed by Napoleon to reorganise the beaten armies into one grand corps, was concentrating in front of the passes, and the allied force would have been unequal to shut up Pamplona, invest San Sebastian, and afford an army of sufficient strength to cover the double operation. Accordingly, orders were issued to disarm the batteries, and, with the exception of four pieces, remove the guns to Passages.

Lord Wellington estimated the character of his opponent with justice, when he made preparations for immediate and vigorous hostilities. From past experience, he was well aware that the Duke of Dalmatia was as rapid in the conception of his plans, as daring in their execution—and notwithstanding the French General used every means to mask the true point on which he had determined to commence his operations, his able opponent, while expecting aggression on a different flank, made admirable arrangements to repel on every side the threatened attack.

Soult's dispositions were completed, and on the 25th of July he directed in person the opening movement of a series of attacks, as remarkable for the skill and bravery with which they were made, as for the dauntless gallantry that repulsed them.

Many sanguinary actions had been fought upon the Peninsula, but in none had the fighting been so desperate and protracted as those designated "The Battles of the Pyrenees." It was an arduous struggle, in which as much depended on the enduring courage of the men, as on the firmness and capacity of their commanders. The combats were fierce and desultory; and the whole extent of the position was frequently and severely tried. The failure of one division could not have been compensated by the success of the rest—nor was a disaster recoverable—as the loss of one pass would have compromised the security of the whole.

On the 26th Picton joined Cole, and took command of the 3d and 4th divisions. He retired slowly as Soult advanced; and next day took a position to cover Pamplona, and offered battle. Lord Wellington, on the 27th, left Hill's headquarters in the Caztan; and, anxious to ascertain how matters went, he crossed the mountain ridge into the valley of the Lanz, and, proceeding to Ostiz, learned that Picton had fallen back from Linzoain to Huarte. Riding at full speed, he reached the village of Sourauren, and his eagle glance detected Clausel's column in march along the ridge of Zabaldica. Convinced that the troops in the valley of the Lanz must be intercepted by this movement, he sprang from his saddle, and pencilled a note on the parapet of the bridge, directing the troops to take the road to Oricain, and gain the rear of Cole's position. The scene that followed was highly interesting. "Lord Fitzroy Somerset, the only staff-officer who had kept up with him, galloped with these orders out of Sourauren by one road, the French light cavalry dashed in by another, and the English General rode alone up the mountain to reach his troops. One of Campbell's Portuguese battalions first descried him and raised a cry of joy, and the shrill clamour caught up by the next regiments swelled as it run along the line into that

stern and appalling shout which the British soldier is wont to give upon the edge of battle, and which no enemy ever heard unmoved. Lord Wellington suddenly stopped in a conspicuous place; he desired that both armies should know he was there; and a double spy who was present pointed out Soult, then so near that his features could be plainly distinguished. The English General, it is said, fixed his eyes attentively upon this formidable man, and speaking as if to himself, said, "Yonder is a great commander, but he is a cautious one, and will delay his attack to ascertain the cause of these cheers; that will give time for the 6th division to arrive, and I shall beat him." And certain it is that the French General made no serious attack that day."[1]

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For nine days the armies had been in each other's presence; and in severe operations and desperate fighting these days were unexampled. The last Frenchman was driven, for the second time, across the frontier—and Spain was free.

The allied casualties exceeded seven thousand men—and the French, doubling that number, by some estimates, and trebling it according to others, might be taken at a mean, and safely set down at fifteen thousand. This was, in a military view, a serious calamity, but in a moral one, it was still greater. The Spaniards had already gained a reputation for efficiency at Vittoria, and in the combats of the Pyrenees it was gallantly sustained. The Portuguese had long since been accounted "worthy to stand side by side with a British regiment," and they vindicated that character most gloriously. With the English, a superiority over every continental army was established—for assaulting or assailed, they had proved themselves unconquerable. Well might Wellington afterwards declare, that "with the army which had crossed the Pyrenees, he could do anything, or go anywhere."

[1] Napier.

In many striking points, the careers of Napoleon and Wellington exhibited a remarkable similitude; born in the same year—following the same profession—passing that dangerous ordeal unharmed, in which so many of their contemporaries perished—and both surviving to gain the loftiest objects at which "ambition's self" could strain. Beset with dangers, their preservation seemed miraculous—as both exposed themselves recklessly—and from their most perilous situations both had singular escapes, and by the most opposite agencies. When at Acre a shell dropped at Napoleon's foot, a soldier seizing him in his arms, flung him on the ground, and the shivered metal passed harmlessly over the prostrate general, and but slightly wounded his preserver. In Paris, the furious driving of his coachman cleared the street before the infernal machine could be exploded. These were probably his greatest perils; and from one he was delivered by the devotion of a grenadier—from the other, by the accidental drunkenness of a servant. Nor were Wellington's escapes less remarkable; for there was rarely an action in which some of his personal attendants were not killed or wounded. At Vittoria, he passed unharmed through the fire of the French centre bristling with cannon, for there eighty pieces were in battery. At Sauroren, he wrote a memorandum on the bridge while the enemy were in actual possession of the village. During the bloody contest which ensued, for a time he sat upon a height within close musket range of the enemy, watching the progress of the battle; and in the evening his danger was still more imminent. "He carried with him," says Colonel Napier, "towards Echallar half a company of the 43rd as an escort, and placed a serjeant named Blood with a party to watch in front while he examined his maps. The French, who were close at hand, sent a detachment to cut the party off; and such was the nature of the ground that their troops, rushing on at speed,

would infallibly have fallen unawares upon Lord Wellington, if Blood, a young intelligent man, seeing the danger, had not, with surprising activity, leaping, rather than running down the precipitous rocks he was posted on, given the General notice; and as it was, the French arrived in time to send a volley of shot after him as he galloped away." It was said of Napoleon that he bore a charmed life, and certainly a special Providence watched over that of Wellington: "God covered his head in battle, and not a hair of it was scathed."

As San Sebastian had been blockaded during the recent operations, the trenches were found in the same state as that in which they had been left, and therefore the siege was promptly resumed. On the 5th of August 1813, the battering-train was re-landed; and the same plan of attack was continued, but with an increased means of offence.

Lord Wellington had previously made repeated charges against the Admiralty for the negligence and inefficiency in which the maritime department of the war had been conducted, but his causes for complaint had never been so many nor so serious. Now in a position to press the siege vigorously to a close, the means he had demanded months before from England had not yet reached the Peninsula, because, forsooth, the mistress of the ocean could not find convoy for the transports. He had already been reduced to the necessity of using French ammunition, although, from the small bore of foreign muskets, the cartridges were too small. When his chest was nearly empty, money was lying for weeks on ship-board waiting for a cruiser to protect it; and when snow was falling on the Pyrenees, the soldiers were without proper clothing, because the vessel containing their greatcoats, though ready to sail in August, was detained at Oporto until November.

The arrival of the long-expected supplies at last enabled

Lord Wellington to proceed rapidly with siege operations, and the batteries formerly employed were enlarged and others constructed and armed. The effect of such powerful artillery was speedily apparent. On the 30th, the sea flank for five hundred feet was laid open; and Lord Wellington, satisfied with the appearance of the breaches, gave orders for their being assaulted next morning. The debouches for the troops were prepared, and as the tide would have ebbed sufficiently by eleven o'clock, that hour was named for the storm.

The garrison expected the assault, and they had prepared to receive it. The appearance of the sea front was deceptive; behind it was a sheer descent of twenty feet, and among the burned houses in its rear, a wall fifteen feet high and loopholed with musketry, with traverses at each extremity, completely isolated the whole extent of the breaches. The tower of Los Hornos, standing in the centre of the greater breach, was mined and charged with twelve hundredweight of powder, and at the salient angle of the covered way, close to which the column of attack must pass, two counter-mines were formed and charged for an explosion. Several guns flanked the breaches, and the Mirador battery commanded the whole space over which the assailants must move to the attack.

The morning was wet and gloomy, the devoted city was shrouded in mist, and for want of light, the thunder of the British batteries were silent. About eight o'clock the fog cleared away—the roar of artillery was heard—and it was continued with unabated violence until the signal was given for the assault, and the storming parties rushed forward to the breaches.

"The column in filing out of the right of the trenches was, as before, exposed to a heavy fire of shells and grape shot, and a mine was exploded in the left angle of the counterscarp of the hornwork, which did great damage, but

did not check the ardour of the troops in advancing to the attack. There never was anything so fallacious as the external appearance of the breach; without some description, its almost insuperable difficulties cannot be estimated. Notwithstanding its great extent, there was but one point where it was possible to enter, and there by single files. All the inside of the wall to the right of the curtain formed a perpendicular scarp of at least twenty feet to the level of the streets; so that the narrow ridge of the curtain itself, formed by the breaching of its end and front, was the only accessible point. During the suspension of the operations of the siege for want of ammunition, the enemy had prepared every means of defence which art could devise, so that great numbers of men were covered by entrenchments and traverses, in the hornwork, on the ramparts of the curtain, and inside of the town opposite to the breach, and ready to pour a most destructive fire of musketry on both flanks of the approach to the top of the narrow ridge of the curtain.

"Everything that the most determined bravery could attempt was repeatedly tried in vain by the troops, who were brought forward from the trenches in succession. No man outlived the attempt to gain the ridge: and though the slope of the breach afforded shelter from the enemy's musketry, yet still the nature of the stone rubbish prevented the great exertions of the engineers and working parties from being able to form a lodgment for the troops, exposed to the shells and grape from the batteries of the castle, as was particularly directed, in obedience to your Lordship's instructions; and, at all events, a secure lodgment could never have been obtained without occupying a part of the curtain.

"In this almost desperate state of the attack, after consulting with Colonel Dickson, commanding the royal artillery, I ventured to order the guns to be turned against the

curtain. A heavy fire of artillery was directed against it, passing a few feet only over the heads of our troops on the breach, and was kept up with a precision of practice beyond all example. . . . Observing now the effect of the admirable fire of the batteries against the curtain, though the enemy was so much covered, a great effort was ordered to be made to gain the high ridge at all hazards, at the same time that an attempt should be made to storm the hornwork.

"It fell to the lot of the 2d brigade of the 5th division, under the command of Colonel the Hon. Charles Greville, to move out of the trenches for this purpose; and the 3d battalion of the Royal Scots, under Lieut.-Colonel Barns, supported by the 38th, under Lieut-Colonel Miles, fortunately arrived to assault the breach of the curtain about the time when an explosion on the rampart of the curtain (occasioned by the fire of the artillery) created some confusion among the enemy. The narrow pass was gained, and was maintained, after a severe conflict; and the troops on the right of the breach, having about this time succeeded in forcing the barricades on the top of the narrow lime wall, found their way into the houses that joined it. Thus, after an assault which lasted above two hours, under the most trying circumstances, a firm footing was obtained.

"It was impossible to restrain the impetuosity of the troops, and in an hour more the enemy were driven from all the complication of defences prepared in the streets, suffering a severe loss in their retreat to the castle, and leaving the whole town in our possession." [1]

The loss sustained by the victors in the storm of San Sebastian exceeded two thousand men; and had the mines been properly exploded, it would no doubt have doubled that amount. The garrison, at the moment of assault, mustered two thonsand effective bayonets, of whom many

[1] Graham's Despatch to Wellington.

were killed and wounded, and hundreds made prisoners, who could not gain the castle after the town had fallen.

While the storm of war was bursting upon the devoted city, blood flowed freely in the Pyrenees, in the vain hope of enabling that fortress to hold out. Aware that the siege was hurried forward with ominous rapidity, Soult determined on a second effort to interrupt its progress, and in the hour of extremity occasion a diversion which the garrison might improve, and trust for final deliverance to some of the many accidents with which war abounds. But the operations of the French Marshal, in a second attempt by the enemy to prevent the establishment of the allies upon the frontier, was defeated by the operations of a part only of the allied army, at the very moment at which the fort of San Sebastian was taken by storm.

Immediately after Soult's second attempt for relieving the fortress to which he attached so much importance had proved a sanguinary failure, Lord Wellington repaired in person to San Sebastian, to adopt the promptest measures for ensuring the reduction of the castle. In the first instance a powerful bombardment was to be resorted to, in the hope that its garrison would be induced to capitulate, while at the same time breaching batteries were ordered to be erected on the works of the town, to ruin the defences of the place, and render hopeless all chances of success should the governor push matters to extremity and venture to abide an assault. The mortar fire was accordingly opened, and it continued with unabated fury until noon on the 3rd, when General Rey sent out a flag of truce, and made propositions to surrender. The terms he demanded were considered by Lord Wellington inadmissible, and the bombardment was consequently renewed.

On the night of the 7th, the breaching batteries being completed and armed, such of the steeples and houses that remained unburned were loopholed for musketry, and all

was prepared for an assault, and at ten o'clock next morning the fire of fifty-nine pieces of artillery opened with an appalling crash. By a preconcerted signal, the fire commenced from every point at the same moment, "and was so extremely rapid and well directed, and of so overpowering a nature, that the castle scarcely returned a single shot. After about two hours' firing, a great impression being made on the wall of the Mirador and of battery De-la-Reyna, the governor beat the *chamade*, and after some negotiation agreed to surrender his garrison prisoners of war."

On the morning of the 10th the garrison accordingly filed out of the castle, and the scene was painfully interesting. The British regiments were drawn out upon the ramparts, the Portuguese formed in the streets, the bands occasionally played, the sun shone brilliantly, and yet, in effect, the spectacle was melancholy. All around told too faithfully the horrors that attend a siege. Crumbling walls and falling roofs nearly blocked up the streets; and fire and rapine seemed to have gone hand in hand in ruining this unfortunate city. Other appearances silently indicated the extent to which military licentiousness had arisen, for a gallows was standing in the Plaza, the halberts were erected, and the provost's guard was in attendance. At noon the French garrison marched out of the castle gate with the customary honours of war. "At its head, with sword drawn, and firm step, appeared General Rey, accompanied by Colonel Songeon, and the officers of his staff; as a token of respect, we saluted him as we passed. The old general dropped his sword in return to the civilities of the British officers, and leading the remains of his brave battalions to the glacis, there deposited their arms, with a well-founded confidence of having nobly done his duty, and persevered to the utmost in an energetic and brilliant defence."[1] The fortress had been most ably defended—

[1] Leith Hay.

held out even when a hope was over that any accident could relieve it, and until the last pound of horse-flesh had been consumed. Yet the terrible repulse which the garrison had inflicted upon the assailants in the first storm, inspired a confidence that continued unshaken until the *chamade* was beaten and the terms of an almost unconditional surrender were carried into execution.

The reduction of San Sebastian had cost the victors a heavy loss; and its defence detailed upon the garrison one comparatively as severe; only thirteen hundred men grounded their arms upon the glacis, the remainder, during the operations, having been rendered *hors de combat.*

CHAPTER XIII

THE sterility of the line of country beyond the Bidassoa, and the uncertainty of obtaining supplies by sea, whose debarkation must be effected on an iron-bound coast, unprovided with harbours, and open to the prevailing winds, made Lord Wellington hesitate in advancing into France. Had he acted entirely upon his military judgment, Catalonia would have been chosen for the theatre of his first operations, after Pamplona should have been reduced. But other considerations decided him upon taking a position within the French territory. In England it was expected as a consequence of his success—on the Continent it was ardently desired as the means of effecting a powerful diversion; and having mutually weighed the question, Lord Wellington acted on political rather than military considerations.

"The French position was the base of the triangle, of which Bayonne was the apex, and the great roads leading from thence to Irun and St. Jean Pied de Port were the sides. A rugged mass of mountains intervened between the left and centre, but nearly all the valleys and communications, coming from Spain beyond the Nieve, centered at St. Jean Pied de Port, and were embraced by an entrenched camp which Foy occupied in front of that fortress."[1] Soult

[1] Napier.

had laboured vigorously to strengthen every portion of the position that nature had left unprotected, and Wellington was anxious to deforce his opponent before these defences were completed. This, however, was not practicable until the fords of the Bidassoa had been sounded, and the state of the tides ascertained. On 6th October (1813), all preparations were ready for the attempt, and while the requisite movements for the attack were effected with admirable skill, their true design had been so ably concealed, that though the French Marshal was kept in constant alarm, the plans of his opponent remained impenetrable.

No better proof could be adduced to establish the military talents of Lord Wellington than his success in executing the daring and difficult operation of crossing the Bidassoa in the presence of an opponent like Marshal Soult, whose circumspection was equal to his ability. The passage of the Douro had always been considered as ranking among the foremost exploits of the allied General; but that of the Bidassoa equalled it in boldness of conception, and probably surpassed it, if the superior style is recollected in which its beautiful combinations were carried into execution.

By the assistance of Spanish fishermen, Lord Wellington ascertained that below the bridge the river could be forded at low water, and that too at three different points. These sands were broad—the tide rose sixteen feet—the whole left bank of the Bidassoa was overlooked by the enemy's position—and therefore the difficulty of collecting troops close to the river unobserved was manifest. Success depended on the rapid execution of the attack; "and a check would have been tantamount to a terrible defeat, because in two hours the returning tide would come with a swallowing flood upon the rear."

While Wellington's combinations were sufficiently marked to excite suspicion, they were so admirably confused with

false movements, that Soult was completely misled. As if fortune had determined to smile upon the bold attempt, at nightfall a storm was seen collecting on the Haya, the Alpine height which overlooked the low grounds where the columns for the assault were to be collected. Thunder rolled, and drowned with its louder peals the noise of bringing artillery into position; and at daylight it burst with all its fury upon the right bank of the river, and the columns remained undiscovered. From the contiguity of the opposite bank, the French pickets were occasionally overheard; and although an enemy, in imposing force, was immediately in their front, their presence was unknown, and their object unsuspected.

Nothing could be more perfect than Lord Wellington's dispositions. The tents were standing, and every camp seemed quiet. At last the hour arrived when the tide had fallen sufficiently, and two heavy columns issued simultaneously from their concealment—one taking the ford pointing towards the heights of Andaya, and the other moving in rapid march directly against the French position at Sans Culottes. The astonishment of the enemy was great. The columns in safety had crossed the centre of the river; then rose a rocket from the steeple of Fuentarabia, and the thunder of the guns already in position on San Marcial answered the preconcerted signal. Another column advanced by the ford of Jonco; others crossed by the upper ones; and from the mountain ridges the grand movement of attack by seven distinct points was visible; the troops above the bridge "plunging at once into the fiery contest, and those below it appeared in the distance like huge sullen snakes winding over the heavy sands."[1]

For several days both armies remained inactive. Soult was preparing for an attack, and Wellington completing his preparations for resuming the offensive so soon as the fall of Pamplona would authorise it. At length the event so

[1] Napier.

long expected occurred, and a despatch from Carlos D'España announced the surrender of Pamplona. For four months that fortress had been resolutely defended; and although the sound of Soult's artillery had been heard by the garrison he had been so anxious to relieve, the diversion was utterly unavailing. In October, the garrison were put upon an allowance of four ounces of horse-flesh each man. In a week that too failed; every domestic animal had been consumed; rats were eagerly sought for, and weeds supplied the place of vegetables. A feeble sally was made upon the 10th, but it was repulsed with a loss of eighty men. Disease generally accompanies famine—scurvy broke out—a thousand men were reported to be in the hospital, as many were wounded, and death and desertion had lessened the garrison by six hundred. In these desperate circumstances, Cassan, the governor, sent out to offer a surrender, provided he was allowed to retire into France with six pieces of artillery. A peremptory rejection of this condition was followed by a proposition that the soldiers should not serve for a year. This, too, being refused, it was intimated to the Spanish General, that after blowing up the works, Cassan would imitate Brennier, and trust to fortune and gallantry for the deliverance of his exhausted garrison. This proceeding on the part of the French governor was so repugnant to the rules of war, that a letter was conveyed to his advanced post, denouncing the attempt as inhuman, involving in a desperate experiment the destruction of unfortunate beings who had already borne the horrors of a siege, with an assurance that should it be attempted, the governor and officers would be shot, and the private soldiers decimated. Most probably the threat of mining the city had been merely used to obtain more favourable terms, and neither the abominable experiment was made nor the terrible retaliation which would have followed was required. On the 31st the garrison sur-

rendered, and the finest fortress on the Peninsula became thus a bloodless conquest.

Winter rapidly came on; and to remain upon those alpine heights, indifferently sheltered, and more insecurely supplied, was almost impossible. Already the hardships of the season were painfully experienced; and men and horses at times were threatened with actual starvation. Communications between distant posts, difficult in good weather, were now almost impracticable; and bivouacs, in summer agreeable enough, became every day more dreary and uncomfortable.

No trial is more severe upon the moral character of the soldier than a state of inaction in the field when accompanied by tiresome duties and severe privations. Many a brave man, who in the presence of an enemy would only abandon his colours with his life, under these circumstances loses spirit and principle, and alike regardless of the impulses of honour and the obligations of an oath, adopts a desperate resolution, and in despair goes over to the enemy. Desertion at this period had arisen to an alarming height; and every exertion of Lord Wellington to arrest the crime had been tried and found unavailing.

The severity of the weather obliged the allied General to suspend an attack, originally designed to have been made on the 29th of October upon the enemy's fortified positions; and Soult, already apprised of the intention, employed the interval until the 10th of November in strengthening his camp by additional field works and abatis. On the 6th and 7th the weather cleared; and the 8th was named for the attack.

Never were Lord Wellington's dispositions more fortunate in conception and effect. Before daybreak, columns were within pistol shot of the works they were to assault, and the enemy were ignorant that any force was in their front more formidable than the ordinary pickets. The

darkness gradually gave place to morning. Three guns pealed from the mountain heights of Achubia; and before their smoke had cleared away, the columns of attack issued from their concealment, and the battle of the Nivelle began.

By these attacks, the enemy was obliged to abandon the strong positions which they had fortified with much care and labour, and the heights on both flanks of the Nivelle were carried. On the night of the 11th the French retired into an entrenched camp in front of Bayonne. The losses on the side of the British were about 2500 killed and wounded.

Lord Wellington had felt considerable inconvenience from the narrow space afforded for the occupation of his army, as a surface far more extended than that which he possessed was requisite for the subsistence of nearly nine thousand horsemen and one hundred pieces of artillery; and he had consequently determined to force the passage of the Nive, although to establish an army on both sides of a navigable river, whose communications were at all times bad, and occasionally totally interrupted by winter floods, with an enemy in front possessing excellent roads and well-fortified positions, was certainly a daring resolution. From the 11th to the 20th, incessant rains prevented the intended movements; but Hill's threatened advance on the 16th, having alarmed the enemy, and caused them to destroy the bridge of Cambo, Lord Wellington brought forward his left wing to those heights between Bidart and Biaritz, which cross the Bayonne road in front of the Château de Barouillet. Half a league to the right, the plateau and village of Arcanges were occupied by the light division, and further on, the sixth division were posted at Avrauntz, with their right upon the river. The remaining divisions were placed *en potence* on the left of the Nive, and occupied Ustaritz and Cambo.

During the short term of inaction which the inclemency of the weather had occasioned, one of those periods of con-

ventional civility, which not unfrequently occurred during the peninsular campaigns, took place between the French and allied outposts. "A disposition," says Quartermaster Surtees, "had for some time been gaining ground with both armies, to mitigate the miseries of warfare, as much as was consistent with each doing their duty to their country; and it had by this time proceeded to such an extent as to allow us to place that confidence in them that they would not molest us even if we passed their outposts."

Lord Wellington, however, discountenanced those friendly relations, where the arrangements were so perfectly amicable that the parties not only took charge of love letters, but even "plundered in perfect harmony."

"Before this order was issued, the most unbounded confidence subsisted between us, and which it was a pity to put a stop to, except for such weighty reasons. They used to get us such things as we wanted from Bayonne, particularly brandy, which was cheap and plentiful; and we in return gave them occasionally a little tea, of which some of them had learnt to be fond. Some of them also, who had been prisoners of war in England, sent letters through our army-post to their sweethearts in England, our people receiving the letters and forwarding them."

The city of Bayonne, famed for its antiquity, and fated to witness a series of fierce and sanguinary conflicts, stands where the Nive unites itself with the Adour. As a fortress, its strength was by no means formidable; but from its local position and entrenched camp, it offered a position for defence, which, when occupied by a veteran army under a commander such as Soult, few generals would have ventured to assail. Lord Wellington, however, felt himself equal to the task; and the preliminary arrangements having been completed, a beacon was fired on the high ground over Cambo on the morning of the 9th, and the opening battle commenced.

The battles of the Nive equalled those of the Pyrenees in obstinacy and duration. In the latter the French Marshal was the assailant; in the former, he was the assailed; and though both in his attack and defence he fought under the most favourable circumstances, in both he was signally defeated. In the Pyrenees, the passes were widely separated; the lateral communications indirect; the position extensive, and consequently vulnerable in many points. The shorter lines of Soult's position enabled him to mass troops together with rapidity, and the undulating surface effectually concealed his movements. Hence his attacks were made with overwhelming numbers, and although expected, they could not be distinctly ascertained until the head of his columns were in immediate contact with the pickets. At Bayonne, the situations of Wellington and Soult were exactly reversed. The allied General was obliged to operate on both sides of a dangerous river, with bad roads and long and inconvenient lines; while at the same time he had to secure St. Jean de Luz from any attempts that Soult might make to gain a point of such importance. The French Marshal, on the contrary, had the advantage of a fortified camp, a fortress immediately beside him, excellent and short communications, with a permanent bridge across the Nive, by which he could concentrate on either bank of the river, and assail that wing of the allies which promised the best chances of success.

To particularise the gallantry of the divisions severally engaged, would be to detail again the battles as they progressed. Never had Lord Wellington more cause to eulogise the matchless bravery of his troops, nor better reason to bear an honourable testimony to the merits of his lieutenants. Throughout these protracted combats, Sir John Hope not only exhibited the prompt resources which meet every contingency incident to a battle, but when an unexpected pressure required additional exertion

to encourage troops, few in number and unsupported for a time, to maintain their ground against an overwhelming force that threatened them, the British General was foremost in the fight, and the marvel was how one, whose person was so distinguished and exposed, could have survived that sanguinary contest. Sir John Hope was slightly wounded in the leg and shoulder, had two horses disabled, his clothes were cut with bullets, and his hat four times struck. No wonder that Lord Wellington, when alluding in one of his letters to the ability of his favourite general, added—"But we must lose him; he exposes himself so terribly."

Had Sir Rowland Hill been still a nameless soldier, the battle of the 13th would have established him at once as an officer of high pretensions. On the heights of St. Pierre, he found himself—with 13,600 men and fourteen pieces of artillery—in his front assailed by seven infantry divisions, mustering 35,000 bayonets; in his rear threatened by the corps of General Paris and the cavalry under Pierre Soult. Never did a general abide a battle against greater odds, and achieve a bolder victory!

The thickness of the morning favoured Soult's order of attack, and his dispositions were, consequently, unobserved. Three infantry divisions, the cavalry of Sparre, and twenty pieces of artillery, marched against Hill's position; Foy's and Maransin's corps succeeded as a support; and a powerful reserve was in the rear. "The mist hung heavily; and the French masses, at one moment quite shrouded in vapour, at another dimly seen, or looming sudden and large and dark at different points, appeared like thunder-clouds gathering before the storm. At half-past eight Soult pushed back the British pickets in the centre, the sun burst out at that moment, the sparkling fire of the light troops spread wide in the valley, and crept up the hills on either flank, while the bellowing of forty pieces of artillery

shook the banks of the Nive and the Adour. Darricau, marching on the French right, was directed against General Pringle. D'Armanac, moving on their left and taking Old Mogguerre as the point of direction, was ordered to force Byng's right. Abbé assailed the centre at St. Pierre, where General Stewart commanded; for Sir Rowland Hill had taken his station on a commanding mount in the rear, from whence he could see the whole battle and direct the movements."[1]

Ashworth's Portuguese brigade bore the brunt of the opening attack; and although the 71st, with two guns, and afterwards the 50th, were sent to their support, the whole were driven back, and the rest of the position won.

Under the brow of the height the 92d were formed. Instantly General Barnes led them forward, scattered the light troops who would have checked him, and charged and repulsed the column. But the French guns opened, their horse artillery commenced a close fire, a second column came forward with imposing steadiness, and the 92d fell back, and reformed behind the high ground.

Happily, a thick hedge covered the front of the Portuguese, and the wood upon the right was occupied by some companies of their caçadores with a wing of the 50th, who held it against every effort of the enemy. The French had already put their grand column in march; and, when the occurrence might have been fatal, two British colonels compromised the safety of their posts, and withdrew their regiments out of fire!

Hill observed that Foy's and Maransin's divisions, after clearing the deep roads which had impeded them, were about to come to the assistance of Abbé, and therefore the battle must be won or lost upon a cast. He quitted the height where he had been posted; halted the Buffs—sent them again into action—and led back the 71st himself.

[1] Napier.

Promptly employing his reserve, he directed one brigade of Le Cor's against D'Armanac's, and led the other in person against Abbé. In the meantime, the wood was bravely held, and the 92d again formed behind the village of St. Pierre, and again came on to dare a combat with a column in numbers five times its superior. But, strange to say, the challenge was declined. A mounted officer, who headed the enemy, waved his sword, and turned the French about; there was no pursuit; and the column retired across the valley, and resumed the position from which it had originally advanced.

It was noon—the assault upon the allied position had failed on every point—Pringle had driven back Soult's right wing—Buchan had repulsed the left; but still there were sufficient troops disposable to have enabled Soult to have massed them in a column, sufficiently strong to force the allied centre. Hill, consequently, reinforced it with the 57th—the 6th division, which had been despatched by Lord Wellington to his assistance, now topped the height behind—the 4th division, with Lord Wellington in person, presently appeared—part of the 3d division succeeded, and the 7th were coming on in rapid march. But the crisis of the day had passed; and the fresh divisions arrived upon the ground only to witness the glory of their brave companions. Buchan was driving D'Armanac's division from the ridge which it had previously carried—Byng clearing another rising ground of the enemy—the high road was vigorously attacked by the centre—and the French were everywhere deforced, and two pieces of artillery captured.

Immediately Lord Wellington, after congratulating Sir Rowland upon his success, ordered a general advance; and until night closed, the retiring columns were vigorously pursued and sustained a heavy loss. Darkness, and very difficult ground, lessened casualties which must have been otherwise enormous; and Soult, after taking Foy's division

across the Adour, sent two to Marsac, and left Count Drouet's in front of Mousseroles.

The action of St. Pierre lasted but a few hours; and on a space, not exceeding a square mile, five thousand men were lying, killed and wounded. When Lord Wellington rode up, one rapid glance across the battle-ground told how furiously the attack had been made, and with what stern bravery it had been repelled on every point; and seizing his lieutenant's hand, he exclaimed, while his eyes sparkled with delight, "My dear Hill, the day's your own!" Never was a compliment more happily paid to skill and courage. It was delivered upon a field heaped with the corpses of the beaten enemy—the columns of attack were seen receding from a last effort, as vainly made, and as bloodily repulsed, as those desperate trials with which Soult throughout the day had hoped to shake the enduring valour of the allies—and, prouder honour! it issued from the lips of him on whose breath the fate of battles hung, and whose footsteps victory had attended.

Lord Wellington had determined to recommence his operations as soon as the weather would permit his troops to move. After his last defeat in December, Marshal Soult had established the centre of his army on the right of the Adour, reaching to Port de Lanne. His left extended along the right bank of the Bidouse to St. Palais, on the left of which place two cavalry divisions were posted, while St. Jean Pied de Port was strongly garrisoned, partly by regular troops and partly by National Guards. The right wing, under Reille, occupied the entrenched camp at Bayonne.

In the interval of inaction which the severity of the weather rendered unavoidable, Soult received large reinforcements; and the position occupied by his army was in every respect well chosen, whether for aggression or defence. His wings were well advanced; but their respective flanks

were safely rested, and each upon a fortress; while in the centre, the command of the Adour and Gave de Pau enabled the French Marshal to concentrate there in force, thus giving him a mass of troops in hand ready for an offensive movement when any opportunity might occur.

When Lord Wellington found that a passage of the Adour was not practicable owing to the stormy weather which prevailed, he confided that important operation to Sir John Hope, and rapidly returned to the right to force the Gaves, an attempt that proved eminently successful, and led to one of his noblest victories—that of Orthez.

As Bayonne was left to its own strength, preparations had been completed for establishing a bridge below the town, and investing the citadel immediately when the passage of the river should be effected. A bend in the course of the Adour concealed one part of the stream about three hundred yards in width from the view of the city; and though the river had a strong current subject to sudden floods, with a strong tide-way, exposed to the heavy swell that crossed its shifting sand-bar, by the skill of the engineers and the daring gallantry of British sailors, the bridge was rapidly thrown across a stream, dangerous in itself, and overlooked by a camp and fortress.

A flotilla of *chasse marées* had been collected at Socoa and Passages, and their arrival in the Adour was intended for the 23d of January (1814), but the winds were boisterous and adverse, and consequently Admiral Penrose was unable to reach his destination. A few small boats and pontoons were obtained, and at noon a hawser was stretched across the river, and by a sort of flying bridge the guards immediately commenced crossing. A French corvette, moored higher up the stream, had been in the meantime cannonaded, and the front of the entrenched camp sufficiently alarmed to keep the attention of the enemy occupied; and early in the evening six companies of the Guards, two companies of

riflemen, and part of the rocket troop were safely debarked on the right bank of the river.

The alarm had now reached the city, and two battalions, amounting to 1300 men, were hastily despatched from the citadel to attack the small and isolated body, who, as it appeared to the French governor, had crossed the river with more daring than discretion. Colonel Stopford, however, availed himself of an excellent position, and formed to receive the threatened attack. His left flank rested on a morass, his right was secured by the river, while the fire of the British artillery swept his whole front from the opposite side, and on either flank rocketeers were placed—then a new arm, and, as it proved, a most imposing one.

The French came on in two columns, beating the *pas-de-charge*, and with the confidence which nearly threefold numbers gave, the Guards coolly and steadily received them. A well-directed musketry was opened and sustained—a lively cannonade supported it from the other bank of the Adour, and the rockets cut through the column as it advanced, killing and wounding numbers in their flight, which on this occasion was most happily directed. The French instantly gave way, and fell back to the citadel, and the gallant band lighted fires and formed their bivouacs.

On the 24th the ferrying of the troops was carried on with unabated activity; and three brigades were already landed on the right bank, when Admiral Penrose and his flotilla appeared in sight, steering for the mouth of the Adour under a press of canvas, and with a favourable wind.

Unfortunately, however, the surf upon the bar was unusually heavy, and Captain O'Reilly, with the French pilot, in attempting to lead the flotilla in, was swamped, and narrowly escaped from drowning. As evening approached, the weather became more wild and stormy, and the whole coast presented one long unbroken line of surf

and spray, as the waves broke upon the bar in quick succession. In the meantime the tide had fallen, and the attempt to cross these dangerous sands was of necessity postponed until flood water; and as the enemy had removed the Balise Occidentale which marked the channel, the pilot replaced the signal staff with a halberd and handkerchief attached, to direct the course that the boats and *chasse marées* should steer.

When the water rose again the crews were promised rewards in proportion to their successful daring, and the whole flotilla approached in close order, but with it came black clouds and a driving gale, which covered the whole line of coast with a rough tumbling sea, dashing and foaming without an interval of dark water to mark the entrance of the river. The men-of-war's boats first drew near this terrible line of surge, and Mr. Bloye of the "Lyra," having the chief pilot with him, heroically led into it, but in an instant his barge was engulfed, and he and all with him were drowned. The "Lyra's" boat thus swallowed up, the following vessels swerved in their course, and shooting up to the right and left, kept hovering undecided on the edge of the tormented waters. Suddenly Lieutenant Cheyne of the "Woodlark" pulled ahead, and striking the right line, with courage and fortune combined, safely passed the bar.[1]

On the following morning the citadel of Bayonne was regularly invested by the 1st division and Bradford's Portuguese brigade, the allies encompassing the whole *enceinte* of the works, their right flank resting on the river below the city, and the left on the banks of the Adour above it. The bend of the stream favoured the investment, by shortening the half circle occupied by the troops, their front extending little more than two miles, while a marsh afforded it considerable protection. The day was beautiful. The movement was made in columns of companies, by battalions,

[1] Napier.

the brigades at deployment distances; while the whole division, pivoting on its right, extended its left beyond the citadel, and then closing gradually to the river, shut in the camp and citadel, and severed all communications between the country and the town. A feint attack was in the meantime made upon the entrenched camp, to keep its garrison on the alert: and the bridge was prepared for laying down, and on the following evening it was completed.

It consisted of six-and-twenty *chasse marées*, lashed to each other, and moored by the bow and stern to resist the current that changed at ebb and flow. Heavy guns were occasionally substituted for anchors; and cables were strained by capstans across the centre of the decks, with strong oak planks laid transversely, and sufficiently secured to form a platform, at the same time pliant and substantial—calculated to rise or fall with the tide—and strong enough to support the weight of artillery. Immense stone piers had been erected by the French to contract the channel of the stream, and, by an artificial current, prevent the sand from accumulating on the bar. These, from their breadth, formed an admirable causeway; while they lessened the space of water to be bridged to an extent of two hundred and seventy yards. It was supposed by French engineers impracticable to secure pontoons so as to resist the ocean swells and mountain floods to which the Adour was so constantly exposed; but a fortunate shifting of a sand-bank formed an excellent breakwater; while a boom was laid above the bridge to arrest fire-ships or floating timber, which it might have been expected the enemy would employ for its destruction.

Immediately on the completion of this extraordinary undertaking, Sir John Hope determined to straiten the investment of Bayonne. It was accordingly executed by an advance in converging columns, covered by a multitude of skirmishers. Those upon either wing established them-

selves within nine hundred yards of the enemy's works, without any serious loss; but the centre attack was not made with equal good fortune. The village of St. Etienne was obstinately defended; while favoured by difficult ground, and covered by the fire of the guns mounted on the northern cavaliers of the citadel, the enemy sharply disputed the villas and gardens which sheltered them from the fire of the assailants. But finally, St. Etienne was carried, and a gun taken from the enemy, who retreated in disorder to the citadel. Thouvenot, the governor, had sallied to support his pickets; but, after two attacks, he was roughly driven back, the village was abandoned, the allied outposts taken up without any further opposition, and every preparation made for a regular siege.

A very singular occurrence at this time was remarked. The left wing had just secured themselves in their new positions, when an immense flight of eagles was seen hovering in the air. They remained about Bayonne for several days, occasionally alighting on the sand-hills, and finally turned their aerial course in the direction of Orthez. "It is not improbable that they were the same flight of birds which, for months after the battle of Vittoria, were seen constantly frequenting that scene of action, sometimes in such numbers as to make it alarming, if not dangerous, to roam singly over the field."

While the operations of the allied left wing were thus fortunately executed, those of the right and centre proved equally successful. The preparatory movements of the corps under Beresford, Hill, and Picton, had rendered the strong positions taken by the French Marshal on the Gave d'Oleron and Gave de Pau untenable; and as it was indispensable for the preservation of his magazines that Soult should abide a battle, he determined to hold the Bordeaux road, and accordingly concentrated his army at Orthez.

The position had every advantage for defence. The left

and centre were particularly strong—the former, indeed, almost unassailable; while the right, although it could be turned, would require extended movements, which must of necessity be dangerous in their execution, both from the difficulty of the ground the troops must traverse, and from the facility with which an army well in hand could be brought to bear on any point that accident might weaken.

The left wing of the allies commenced the battle seriously about nine o'clock, although from daylight a partial fusilade had been kept up between the light troops, occasionally varied by the deeper booming of artillery. While the 3d and 6th divisions carried the lower grounds against which they had been directed, the 4th had won the village of St. Boes, and endeavoured, by desperate fighting, to gain a footing on the open ground behind it.

"Five times breaking through the scattered houses did Ross carry his battle into the wider space beyond; yet, ever as the troops issued forth, the French guns from the open hill smote them in front, and the reserved battery on the Dax road swept through them with grape from flank to flank. And then Taupin's supporting masses rushed forwards with a wasting fire, and lapping the flanks with skirmishers, which poured along the ravines on either hand, forced the shattered columns back into the village. It was in vain that with desperate valour the allies, time after time, broke through the narrow way, and struggled to spread a front beyond. Ross fell dangerously wounded; and Taupin, whose troops were clustered thickly and well supported, defied their utmost efforts. Nor was Soult less happy on the other side. The nature of the ground would not permit the 3d and 6th divisions to engage many men at once, so that no progress was made; and one small detachment which Picton extended to his left, having made an attempt to gain the smaller tongue jutting out from the central hill, was suddenly charged, as it neared the summit, by Foy,

and driven down again in confusion, losing several prisoners."[1]

Finding that the left attack had not succeeded, Lord Wellington detached a caçadore battalion to clear Ross's right flank from the skirmishers that had annoyed it. But the Portuguese brigade was already broken and driven back, and the village cleared of the British troops, and again occupied by the enemy. On every side the attack had failed; for beyond a given point the assailants had never been able to advance—and now, disordered and repulsed, nothing appeared wanting but for the French Marshal to push forward his reserves, and seize a decisive victory.[2]

But the lion was in the path. Wellington had galloped forward to direct the movements of his left wing personally; and now, in the thickest of the fire, he suddenly changed the plan of attack, and with that rapidity of conception, which with him had turned the fortunes of so many fields, he instantly changed his dispositions.

Directing Walker's division (the 7th) and Barnard's light brigade against the left of the height, where the French right united with the centre, he supported their attack by an advance of the 3d and 6th divisions, which previously had remained unengaged, until Beresford's operations should be demonstrated. In a moment "the face of the battle was changed." The furious assault of the light brigade bore down resistance, and gained the crest of the

[1] Napier.

[2] "As this happened at the moment when the detachment on Picton's left was repulsed, victory seemed to declare for the French; and Soult, conspicuous on a commanding open hill, the knot of all his combinations, seeing his enemies thus broken and thrown backwards on each side, put all his reserves in movement to complete the success. It is said that in the exultation of the moment he smote his thigh exclaiming, '*At last I have him!*' Whether this be so or not, it was no vainglorious speech, for the moment was most dangerous."—*Napier.*

hill. The 52d bore right against a French battalion which connected the divisions of Foy and D'Armanac, and at the same time Picton and Clinton were moving on their flank. On both sides the musketry was close and destructive. Two generals, Bechand and Foy, were carried from the field; and troops, so lately confident of victory, as suddenly became shaken and discouraged. Indeed, the storm had so strangely burst from an unexpected quarter—for the march of the 52d had been hardly perceived save by the skirmishers—that the enemy "got into confusion, and the disorder spreading to Reille's wing, he also was forced to fall back and take a new position to restore his line of battle. The narrow pass behind St. Boes was thus opened, and Wellington, seizing the critical moment, thrust the 4th and 7th divisions, Vivian's cavalry, and two batteries of artillery through, and spread a front beyond."[1]

Instantly D'Armanac's position was crowned by a British battery, whose fire swept through the columns exposed to their cannonade, and rent these heavy masses into pieces. In vain the French cavalry charged the English guns. The fire of the 42d repulsed them—the 3d division fought with its customary determination—Inglis's brigade charged with the bayonet; and Soult, seeing the ground was not to be recovered, commenced an orderly retreat, although but a brief space before his movements had indicated the advance that leads to victory.

Never did a beaten army escape the worst consequences of a *déroute* more narrowly. Had the British cavalry been enabled to get forward with more celerity, a large portion of the French infantry must have been unavoidably cut off. To another circumstance, also, the comparatively low amount of the French casualties may be attributed. A defeat, complete as that of Orthez, would have most probably entailed upon the vanquished army a terrible disaster,

[1] Napier.

had not Lord Wellington been prevented from following up his success, and pressing his advantages by personal direction. At the very moment when the confusion in the enemy's ranks was increasing, a spent shot struck the pommel of his sword, and caused a painful contusion. Lord Wellington with difficulty kept his saddle, and an intersected country, which otherwise he would have crossed at speed, was, therefore, slowly traversed. Had be been allowed to urge it on, the pursuit would have been ardently and successfully continued; but it ceased at Sault de Navailles, and night closed upon the victors and the vanquished.

The losses sustained on both sides were considerable. On the allied part they fell upon the Anglo-Portuguese alone, for no Spanish troops took share in these sanguinary and brilliant operations. The casualties of the enemy were, however, immensely greater. Besides six guns, Soult lost in killed, wounded, and prisoners, at least five thousand men, exclusive of thousands of conscripts who flung away their arms, and disbanded themselves the moment that the rout began. This will account for the high estimate to which the French casualties were raised even by themselves; the total loss having been variously stated—by some writers at ten thousand, by others at fourteen thousand—an immense number in a single action to be thus placed *hors de combat.*

Although the defeat of Orthez had not been so calamitous in the first instance as might have been reasonably expected, its consequences produced the most serious embarrassments. The loss of magazines, the desertion of conscripts, the abatement of public confidence—all crippled the resources of Marshal Soult, and consequently disheartened his soldiery and relaxed their discipline. The uncertain resources of the French army, and the general laxity of their military system, now rendered them impatient and insubordinate.

With the inhabitants all apprehension from the invaders had long since passed away, and the inoffensive demeanour of the Anglo-Portuguese, added to the probity and liberality with which every engagement was discharged, obtained the friendship of the peasantry and secured their perfect neutrality. Indeed, the conduct of the French army had been latterly so outrageous as to alienate popular affection; and the peasantry viewed them, not as countrymen, but marauders. These feelings had become so marked that Soult, in his correspondence with the Duke de Feltre, complained that, in the departments of the Lower Pyrenees and Land de Ger, the inhabitants were better affected to the allies than the French; and that it was by no means improbable that they would not join them in the field.

Soult's retreat across the plains of Ger might have been seriously endangered, could the British cavalry have been promptly employed; but a thick country and strong rear-guards prevented it. A wooded height, commanding the great road, was evidently occupied by the enemy—and Lord Wellington could not determine the force in which the enemy held it, for the fire of a cloud of skirmishers prevented a reconnaissance. By the daring address of an English officer, however, this difficulty was overcome. He rode forward as if he would force his way through the French skirmishers, but when in the wood dropped his reins and leaned back as if badly wounded; his horse appeared to canter wildly along the front of the enemy's light troops, and they, thinking him mortally hurt, ceased their fire and took no further notice. He thus passed unobserved through the wood to the other side of the hill, where there were no skirmishers, and ascending to the open summit above, put spurs to his horse and galloped along the French main line, counting their regiments as he passed. His sudden appearance, his blue undress, his daring confidence, and his speed, made the French doubt if he was an

enemy, and a few shots only were discharged; while he, dashing down the opposite declivity, broke from the rear through the very skirmishers whose fire he had first essayed in front. Reaching the spot where Lord Wellington stood, he told him there were but five battalions on the hill.[1]

On March 26th the armies again confronted each other —Beresford taking post behind a small stream called the Aussonelle, while the French were in position on the Touch. The rate of marching was very different, the French army accomplishing in four days what the allied took seven to perform. For such very opposite methods of executing their respective movements, each commander had sufficient reasons. Soult, aware of the importance of Toulouse, was anxious to reach that city without delay, and secure a strong position, before his opponent could disturb him. Wellington was more solicitous to bring his army efficiently than rapidly forward; and by husbanding their strength, and keeping his corps well together, be ready for the crisis when it came. In their relative movements, both generals evinced a sound discretion. Every moment gained by Soult enabled him to become more formidable—and important advantages compensated the fatigue he inflicted upon his soldiers; while with Lord Wellington, all considerations gave way before one great object—that of placing the allies on their battle ground in fresh and vigorous condition, and trusting the result to that discipline and valour, which had been so often depended on, and never been found wanting.

On the 28th, Lord Wellington proceeded to lay down his bridge; but the water surface, on the sheer line being stretched over, was found too extensive to be covered by the pontoons. This failure elicited a remark from a staff officer, that, "until the river fell a passage would not be effected." Lord Wellington observed instantly, with cheer-

[1] Napier.

ful animation, but with strong decision, "If it will not do one way, we must try another; for I never in my life gave up anything I once undertook."

To a general circumstanced like Soult, the occupation of Toulouse was an object of paramount importance. It commanded the best bridges over the Garonne, and the chief roads throughout the country—while its arsenal, immense population, and lastly, its defensibility, gave it local advantages, which, from its vicinity to his birthplace, the French Marshal could properly appreciate. Toulouse offered also an excellent position on which a battle might be received. The breadth of the Garonne—the protection which the canal of Languedoc afforded—the strength of the fortified suburbs of St. Cyprien, St. Stephen, and Guillemerie—the heights of Sacarin and Cambon—and the stronger ridge of Mont Rave—all were most favourable for maintenance; and Soult, with local knowledge, excellent judgment, and ample time, turned all to the best advantage. It was, in fine, a position in every respect important, easily held, and easily retired from.

Lord Wellington was delicately situated, and delay would not be serviceable. Bayonne, indeed, might fall, and the Spaniards be brought forward from the Bastan; but, during that time, Soult also would receive reinforcements, and employ every hour usefully in strengthening the defences of both the river and the city. Lord Wellington "had taken the offensive, and could not resume the defensive with safety; the invasion of France once begun, it was imperative to push it to a conclusion. Leading an army victorious and superior in numbers, his business was to bring his adversary to battle as soon as possible; and as he could not force his way through St. Cyprien in face of the whole French army, nothing remained but to pass the Garonne above or below Toulouse."[1]

[1] Napier.

Before daybreak on the 10th, the light and 3d divisions crossed the river, driving in the French outposts; the Spanish corps gained the Pugade; Beresford, in three columns, but without artillery, passed the marshes between the Ers and Mont Rave; while the light cavalry forced the French from the bridge of Bordes, and seized that of Montaudran.

The Spanish corps loosely assailed the height of Calvinet, and were repulsed with heavy loss. They were rallied, and again led on; but the second effort was still more unfortunate, for now a regular *déroute* ensued; and the disaster was only checked by Lord Wellington covering their flight, by interposing Ponsonby's dragoons, and, under a heavy fire of reserve artillery, and a threatened advance of a wing of the light division, obliging their pursuers to retire to their own entrenchments.

But a more serious repulse was inflicted on the 3d division. Picton had been directed to make a false attack upon the bridge of Jumeaux; but, heedless of an order distinctly given, and with the very worst military judgment, he rashly attempted to carry works approached over a dead flat, exposed necessarily to a withering fire, and which, when reached, could only be surmounted by escalade. His noble division sustained a heavy loss. Four hundred officers and men were uselessly sacrificed; and thus, through the unsteadiness of the Spaniards, and the rashness of Picton, the allied attacks from the height of Pugade to the river had proved sanguinary failures.

The battle was apparently lost; and there is little doubt but the means of victory were in Soult's hands, had they been promptly exercised. "The repulse of Picton, the utter dispersion of the Spaniards, and the strength of the second line of entrenchments at St. Cyprien, enabled him to draw first Taupin's whole division, and then one of Maransin's brigades from that quarter, to reinforce his

battle on the Mont Rave. Thus three divisions and his cavalry, that is to say, nearly fifteen thousand combatants, were disposable for an offensive movement without in any manner weakening the defence of his works on Mont Rave or on the canal."[1]

Beresford, in the meantime, was executing a flank movement, and struggling over a marshy surface two miles in extent, always within range of the French guns, and occasionally exposed to their musketry. After driving the enemy from the village of Mont Blanc, the Marshal left his guns there for a double purpose—assisting the operations of Freyre's corps, by cannonading the French works at La Pugade, and expediting his flank march, which the encumbrance of artillery must have seriously delayed. Indeed, the movement was imminently dangerous; and fortune offered chances to the French commander, which, if vigorously employed, must have produced results very different from those on which Soult afterwards rested a claim to victory.

On the left of Beresford's march, the Ers flowed parallel to the fortified heights upon his right—and the swamp narrowed as he advanced, and its surface became every step more difficult. Headed by a division of dragoons—one flank shut in by a river—the other, overlooked by heights bristling with artillery and crowned by 14,000 infantry, Beresford pushed forward without a gun, gained the point he aimed at, and formed at the foot of the position.

The line was scarcely completed when the French vigorously attacked it—but a flight of rockets went roaring through their ranks; and that arm of war, so lately introduced, terrified and disordered troops who never before had witnessed their effect, nor heard the appalling noise that accompanies their discharge. Lambert's and Anson's brigades rushed forward with a deafening cheer. The charge of Vial's cavalry on the right flank was repulsed; and on

[1] Napier.

the left it was anticipated by the rapid advance of the 4th division. Nothing could check that conquering movement. The plateau was gained—two redoubts carried at the bayonet's point—and Taupin killed in a vain attempt to rally his flying troops, who hurried off in the greatest disorder to Sacarin and Cambon.

For a brief space the battle ceased. Soult employed the interval in reinforcing his right from his reserves, while Beresford got his artillery from Mont Blanc. About two o'clock the action was renewed—and Pack and Douglas, the former with the Highland, the latter with the Portuguese brigade, rushed from the hollow ground which had previously sheltered them, and mounting the heights, carried the whole French defences, including the redoubts of Colombette and Calvinet.

Sustained by the reserves, pushed freely into action, and covered by a tremendous fire of artillery, the French with superior numbers returned to the attack, and a terrible contest ensued. One redoubt was recovered; but still though sadly reduced, the remnant of the Highlanders held the hill; and the 6th division having steadily advanced, the enemy were again driven from the hardly-contested eminence—Colombette a second time taken—and the French finally retired, carrying with them Generals Harispe and Baurot, both severely wounded in encouraging a desperate but vain resistance.

The tide of battle turned; and it was hopeless to expect that the allies could be dislodged by any fresh effort that Soult could make. Beresford had got his artillery into line; and already master of the greater portion of Mont Rave, he was marching along its crest to renew the action. Picton was threatening the bridge from which he had been previously repulsed—the Spaniards had rallied and reformed—and the light division was ready to support their new attack.

Soult, under all these circumstances, declined the contest; abandoned the northern portion of the plateau and redoubt at Calvinet; and, contenting himself with retaining the fortified posts at Sacarin and Cambon, fell back behind the canal, leaving the whole line of works and the heights of Mont Rave in the undisputed possession of the allies.

In this sanguinary battle the allied loss exceeded four thousand six hundred men, including four generals, Brisbane, Pack, Mendizabel, and Espelette, wounded. The French casualties might probably have been less by a thousand; but they lost a gun, and had five generals placed *hors de combat.* It was a lamentable contest, because it was a useless one. Much blood had been unnecessarily—and some assert wantonly—spilled; for Napoleon was already hurled from his throne, and a provisional government had been appointed.

The night of a bloody day was passed on both sides in preparation for another trial. Soult, with the arsenal of Toulouse to supply every deficiency, was reorganised next morning—Wellington was obliged to seek his supplies from magazines beyond the river—and although he crossed over to St. Cyprien, to expedite the replacement of ammunition and make new dispositions with Hill's corps for the intended attack, the day wore away before the necessary arrangements were completed. Anxious to renew the battle, he had already pushed his light cavalry along the canal to cut Soult off from Carcassone, and interrupt Suchet's communications; but evening came before he was in a condition to force a passage of the bridges—and therefore the attack was of necessity postponed until the 12th.

These preparatory movements of the allied cavalry had not been lost upon the French Marshal, and he saw unequivocal indications of a determination to shut him in—for works had been commenced across the roads leading to his lines, and the allies, closing up rapidly, everywhere drew nearer to the place. Toulouse was already under the guns

of the invaders—St. Cyprien might be ruined in an hour—and, therefore, while reiterating his entreaties that Suchet should advance, Soult added a belief that he could not hold his position, and observed, "that it was not improbable but he should be forced to fight a passage from the city." On the night of the 11th he abandoned Toulouse, and made a forced march of two-and-twenty miles to Villefranche—leaving two generals, sixteen hundred disabled men, immense magazines, and eight pieces of artillery to the conquerors.

Soult's night retreat was ably executed, his corps defiling within range of the English artillery; and although Hill's division and the light cavalry pursued, his losses were confined to some fifty dragoons which were overtaken and cut off. On the same day, Lord Wellington entered Toulouse amid the acclamations of the Bourbon party, who, immediately upon Soult's departure, raised the white flag, and declared for Louis XVIII. That evening, two officers, Cols. Cooke and St. Simon, reached the city after a vexatious delay near Blois, bearing authenticated intelligence that the reign of Napoleon had ended—and St. Simon was despatched to Soult, at whose headquarters he arrived early next day.

While these events had been progressing in the south, the crisis of Napoleon's fortunes was hurrying with fearful rapidity to its consummation. On 31st March, the allied sovereigns entered Paris, no demonstration of attachment towards the Emperor being evinced, nor the slightest disorder ensuing. Finding that his capital was in the possession of his enemies, Napoleon repaired to Fontainebleau, collected any troops which could be obtained, and announced his intention of "marching direct to Paris" on the 3d. But on the 2d, a decree passed the conservative Senate, based upon an abdication of the throne.

While these final measures were in progress, the mission

of Col. St. Simon to Marshal Soult did not induce the Duke of Dalmatia, as might have been expected, to give an adhesion to the provisional government. On the contrary, he treated St. Simon's authority as questionable; and, placing his army in observation at Castelnaudery, expressed a determination to hold a defensive attitude until the abdication of Napoleon was properly authenticated; proposing, in the meantime, that a suspension of hostilities should be agreed to. To this Lord Wellington peremptorily objected—and instantly moved his army, either to compel Soult's adhesion or recommence operations. On the 17th, the French and English outposts had assumed a threatening attitude, when happily an official communication from the chief of the Emperor's staff satisfied the Marshal that Napoleon's fate was sealed—and consequently he forwarded his adhesion. Suchet having adopted the cause of the Bourbons, his army was included in the convention agreed upon by Wellington and Soult, and intelligence was immediately despatched to Clinton and Hope announcing the events which had occurred.

Thus was the war concluded, happily for all parties, even for the French, whom nothing but such a series of defeats could have delivered from the tyranny which their former victories had brought upon themselves. It was by the national spirit which had first shown itself in the Peninsula, by the persevering efforts of Great Britain in the Peninsular War, the courage of her troops, and the skill of her great commander, that Buonaparte's fortune had been checked at its height, and successfully resisted, till other governments were encouraged, and other nations roused by the example; and that power, the most formidable which had ever been known in the civilised world, was then beaten down. The independence of Spain and Portugal had been triumphantly vindicated and secured; and if the civil liberties of both countries were not restored, and firmly established upon a

sure foundation, the cause is to be found, not in any foreign influence exercised ill, but in old evils which time had rendered inveterate.

Buonaparte remained still at Fontainebleau: Elba had been named for his future residence, with a liberal allowance for the maintenance of an establishment that still should bear the semblance of a royal one; and commissioners were nominated on the part of the allied powers, to conduct the fallen Emperor to the place of his destination. After a humiliating journey, during which the insecurity of popular affection was amply proved, Napoleon embarked at Frejus in the "Undaunted" frigate, and proceeded to "the lonely isle," which was to form the dominions of one for whose ambition half the Continent had not been found sufficient.

While these momentous changes were in progress, the allies were assembled in the capital of France to organise anew the political relations of Europe, on which Napoleon's arbitrary enactments had produced such serious changes. As the representative of Great Britain, Lord Castlereagh hastened to the convention, having recommended to the Prince Regent that the office of ambassador to the court of France should be given to Lord Wellington: and on the 21st, Sir Charles Stewart was despatched to Toulouse to apprise the allied commander of the appointment, and request his presence in the French capital to assist in the important deliberations that should occur.

Finding that he might safely quit the army, to whose discipline he had previously borne an honourable testimony, Lord Wellington set out for the French capital on the night of the 10th, and arrived in Paris on the 4th of May. From all, his reception was enthusiastic; and each of the allied sovereigns expressed in unqualified praise how much the glorious issue of the long and doubtful struggle for the restoration of European liberty had been indebted to his

talents and enduring constancy. From the restored king (Ferdinand) he had recently received a letter expressing the deepest gratitude and esteem; and the Order of the Sword had been sent him by the Crown Prince of Sweden. By his own sovereign a dukedom was conferred upon himself, and peerages on his most distinguished lieutenants.

On May 3d Louis XVIII., who during his exile had resided in England, made his public entry into Paris, and on the 30th he signed a treaty of peace and alliance with Great Britain, Austria, Russia, and Prussia.

The Duke of Wellington's stay in Paris was necessarily brief; and from the French capital he proceeded to Madrid, where his presence was ardently expected. The country was threatened with a political convulsion, which Ferdinand's early display of unamended despotism and cruelty seemed calculated to hurry to a crisis. From the commanding influence which the Duke possessed over every party, it was considered possible that the spirit of the contending factions might be sufficiently moderated to lead to such practicable alterations as might restore national tranquillity; and, anxious for its accomplishment, he left Toulouse, and reached Madrid on the 24th of May. On the 5th of June, the Duke took his departure; but, previously, he addressed an able memorandum to Ferdinand, in which the relative advantages to be gained by Spain attaching herself exclusively to France, or maintaining a friendly understanding, "and cementing her alliance with Great Britain," were clearly and honestly examined. On the 10th, the Duke rejoined the army at Bordeaux, and the peace having been signed by the allied powers in Paris, nothing remained but to break up the armies in the south, and despatch the troops under orders for America, with the least possible delay.

Immediately afterwards, the Duke of Wellington proceeded to England; and on the 23d, he reached Dover. His reception, after a long absence of five years, was thus

described in a periodical of that day:—"About five o'clock this morning, his Majesty's sloop-of-war, the 'Rosario,' arrived in the roads, and fired a salute. Shortly afterwards, the yards of the different vessels of war were manned; a salute took place throughout the squadron, and the launch of the 'Nymphen' frigate was seen advancing towards the harbour, with the Duke of Wellington: at this time the guns upon the heights and from the batteries commenced their thunder upon the boat leaving the ship; and on passing the pier-heads his lordship was greeted with three distinct rounds of cheers from those assembled; but upon his landing at the Crosswall, nothing could exceed the rapture with which his lordship was received by at least ten thousand persons; and notwithstanding it was so early, parties continued to arrive from town and country every minute. The instant his lordship set his foot on shore, a proposition was made, and instantly adopted, to carry him to the Ship Inn: he was borne on the shoulders of our townsmen, amidst the reiterated cheers of the populace."

The allied sovereigns had preceded him to England on their memorable visit to the Regent; and being at Portsmouth to witness the grand spectacle of a naval review, the Duke set out the following morning to pay his duty to his Prince. Wherever he appeared the most enthusiastic greetings marked the attachment of the people towards the great captain of the age; and on the 28th he appeared for the first time in the House of Lords since his well-merited elevation to the peerage of Great Britain. By both Houses of Parliament the vote of £500,000, with which the Duke should purchase an estate, was unanimously passed. In addition to the pecuniary remuneration voted by Parliament the House of Commons resolved to pay him the highest tribute of respect and applause that it was possible to bestow on a subject, that of its thanks, accompanied with a deputation of its members, to congratulate him on his return to this country.

CHAPTER XIV.

EARLY in Feb. 1815 the Duke of Wellington repaired from Paris to Vienna to replace Lord Castlereagh, whose presence was deemed so indispensable at home before the meeting of the British Parliament, that, though the Congress was still engaged, as it had been since the preceding October, he was obliged to absent himself from its deliberations, and nominate a successor. Months had passed—the manifold and conflicting interests of the several European Powers required so much consideration, that the progress of the general settlement was necessarily slow. The attitude of the Continent presented the appearance of an armed peace, for each state maintained a war establishment, and seemed to be preparing rather for the field, than seeking the repose to which, for a quarter of a century, Europe had been a stranger. This delay, however, in resuming peaceful relations proved most fortunate—for one of the most singular events which history records suddenly and unexpectedly occurred—Napoleon's escape from Elba.

Whatever trifling differences might have hitherto prevailed among the members of the Congress, regarding territorial or financial questions, every consideration yielded now to the emergency of the day; and all cordially united

in one design, and expressed a firm determination of maintaining the treaty of Paris inviolate, and placing the disturber of Europe without the pale of civil and social relations. Accordingly, on the 13th of March, a "Declaration" to that effect was signed and promulgated by the plenipotentiaries[1] on the part of their respective courts.

When the descent of Napoleon at Cannes was reported in the capital, both Chambers were hastily convoked on the 6th, and subsequently the ex-Emperor was declared "a rebel and a traitor." In the meantime his progress was unopposed; and not only loose adventurers, but whole regiments, joined him as he hurried towards the capital. At first he announced himself lieutenant to his son; but at Lyons, reassuming the purple, he addressed the French people in his own name, heading his manifesto "By the grace of God, and the constitutions of the empire, Emperor of the French." Declaring everything "null and void" which had taken place since his abdication, he abolished all orders and appointments, and convoked a general meeting of the authorities to re-establish a constitution, giving to this extraordinary assembly the title of "Champ de Mai."

On the 28th of March the Duke of Wellington was placed over the armies in the Netherlands; the Prince of Orange resigning the chief command, and accepting a subordinate appointment. Early on the morning of the 5th of April the Duke reached Brussels; and startling events, "each in itself a history," followed in quick succession.

The Declaration of Vienna was calculated to produce a sensation in France, which Napoleon would have willingly avoided. To prevent its dissemination was impossible;

[1] Austrian, Spanish, French, British, Portuguese, Prussian, Russian, and Swedish.

and he thought it expedient to counteract its effects, by accompanying the document with a manifesto of his own. This contained an elaborate justification of his enterprise, a specific detail of the grievances, real or imaginary, which were cited as the pretexts for invading France, and an appeal to the law of nations, against the doctrine supposed to be inculcated by the language of that celebrated anathema. But the assertions and arguments of Napoleon were feeble apologies for a wanton interruption of those peaceful relations which his reappearance was certain to disturb; and if a portion of the French nation, misled by personal attachment, were blind to the flimsy veil with which he would have shrouded the workings of inexcusable ambition, others viewed the act in its true colours, and trembled for the consequences that should follow.

None saw more clearly the results which his madness must produce than the aggressor; and he made a last, but ineffectual, attempt to avert the hostility of Europe, and obtain a recognition of his power from the allied sovereigns. Abandoning the usual mode of official communication between governments, and imitating his conduct when elected to the consular throne, Napoleon addressed a letter personally to the different monarchs. But the allies were not to be imposed upon by assurances of peaceful intentions, from one who for years had deluged the Continent in blood. Napoleon's letter was returned from the British Cabinet unopened; and at Vienna, it elicited from the Congress a fresh Declaration of personal hostility, which neither concessions nor promises could avert.

Had Napoleon really expected that professions, falsified by every action of his life, would avert the storm that was collecting, the firm and uncompromising rejection of his overtures would have dissipated the hope. The sword was drawn, and the scabbard was thrown away. Through blood he had waded to a throne—by bloodshed only could that

elevation be maintained—and with a desperate resolution he proceeded to attain the means by which he could secure the object of a guilty ambition. With few exceptions, every man in France between the ages of twenty and sixty was called out, and commissioners were spread over the country to urge forward a general enlistment. The columns of the *Moniteur* were daily filled with the most exaggerated accounts of warlike preparation. "The aggregate was vauntingly computed at above 2,000,000 of effective men; but not more than one-tenth was actually equipped and took the field. The Imperial Guard was re-established, and consisted of eighty infantry regiments, five regiments of cavalry, several corps of gendarmerie, engineers, &c., composing a total of more than 40,000 men. Unceasing exertions were made to provide a powerful artillery, which was always an important point in Napoleon's preparations," and that they were successful was sufficiently proved by the number of cannon abandoned at the rout of Waterloo.

Napoleon's journey was secret and expeditious. Before daylight on the 12th of June he quitted the capital, and on the 14th joined the army collected on the frontier. Ere sunrise next morning he was dressed, and at dawn he was on horseback. His *corps d'armée* were already in march—the Prussian outposts driven in—and a last campaign opened, which three days virtually concluded.

Of the three armies now collected on the French frontier, that commanded by the Duke of Wellington was the weakest and the worst. It was, with few exceptions, a "green army," formed of a mixed force, comprising British, Hanoverian, and Belgian troops, with the contingents of Nassau and Brunswick Oels. Its effective strength on the 15th of June was 78,500 men, of whom 53,000 only were British, Germans, and Hanoverians. On the 18th its numbers were considerably reduced, for by that morning's

returns, the grand total of the force under the immediate orders of the Duke of Wellington, was 74,040 men.

The general distribution of the army, previously to the commencement of hostilities, was as follows: the right wing, under Lord Hill, was near Ath; the left, under the Prince of Orange, at Brain-le-Comte and Nivelles; a strong corps of cavalry under the Marquis of Anglesea, was quartered near Grammont; while a reserve of all arms occupied the city and vicinity of Brussels, where the Duke had fixed his headquarters.

The Prussian army was considerably stronger than that termed British; and on the 27th of May it was fully concentrated on the Meuse—the 1st corps, commanded by Von Ziethen, being at Charleroi; the 2d, under Von Pirch, at Namur; the 3d, under Thielman, near Ciney; and the 4th (Bulow's) at Liege. Its total strength was returned at 115,000 men.

The French army, previous to the opening of hostilities, comprised the five grand corps which formed the armies of the North and the Moselle, and amounted, on a low calculation, to 150,000 men. The 1st corps was commanded by Drouet (Count d'Erlon); the 2d, by Reille; the 3d, by Vandamme; the 4th, by Gerard; and the 6th, by Lobau. To these were attached four divisions of cavalry, under Pajol, Excelmans, Valmy, and Milhaud—the whole forming a distinct corps, commanded by Marshal Grouchy. There were, besides, two divisions of the guard, under Friard and Morand, making, according to a French return, a grand total of 154,370 men; of whom 24,750 were cavalry, 7,520 artillery, and 122,100 infantry, with 296 pieces of cannon.

While the French army exceeded the Duke of Wellington's in number, in its composition it was still more superior. The elements for its construction were ready for Napoleon's use—for the country was overrun with soldiers

—men, according to Davoust's term, "whose trade was war, and whose battles were as many as their years." From the moment the return of the Emperor was announced, these veterans hurried to his standards. To organise a practised soldiery was comparatively an easy task; and hence the army with which Napoleon crossed the frontier, as far as numbers went, was equal to any that he had ever directed on a battle-field. That commanded by Lord Wellington was formed of very different materials. A mixed force, hastily collected, and imperfectly put together, what unity of operation could be expected in the hour of trial, from men whose languages were unknown to each other—whose dresses were unfamiliar to the eye—whose efficiency was untried—and whose courage and fidelity were doubtful? The greater portion of the Peninsular soldiers had been unfortunately removed beyond recall. Half the regiments in Belgium were, therefore, second battalions composed of militiamen and recruits; and of the contingent troops, many were but recently embodied, and few had ever been under fire.

At daylight on the 15th, Napoleon commenced hostilities. His 2d corps crossed the Sambre, near Thuin, and drove in Ziethen's outposts, who fell back on Fleurus to concentrate with the Prussian corps. On both sides the fighting was determined. Charleroi was obstinately maintained; and although vigorously pressed by the French cavalry, Ziethen retreated with perfect steadiness. That evening Napoleon's headquarters were at Charleroi.

The night of the 15th was employed by the Emperor in passing his remaining divisions to the left bank of the Sambre, and by Blucher in taking a position on which he might accept a battle. The 1st Prussian corps was posted at St. Amand; the 3d, at Brie; the 4th, at Ligny; and the 2d, in reserve. The attack on Ziethen was communicated to the Duke of Wellington at Brussels, at half-past

four in the afternoon; but it was merely intimated that a sharp affair of outposts had occurred—for as yet the more serious operations of Napoleon were wrapped in mystery—and whether he would actually become assailant was uncertain.

Convinced that the Emperor was determined to enter Belgium, the Duke of Wellington made the necessary dispositions to concentrate his army on the extremity of a position, immediately connecting his own left flank with the right wing of the Prussian army. The point on which Wellington's detached corps were directed to unite, was a hamlet called Quatre Bras, standing on the intersection of the great road from Charleroi to Brussels, by that running from Namur to Nivelles. The village is small, and the adjacent country presents a surface in which woodlands and cornfields are intermixed. The Bois de Bossu is close to the hamlet, and its distance from Brussels is about twenty English miles.

Brussels, from its immediate contiguity to the frontier, and being the headquarters of the Commander-in-Chief, was at the period filled by an influx of strangers. On the 15th, no unusual excitement was discernible—the streets were crowded—and although it was believed that Napoleon had joined the army, and consequently was within a few marches of the city, the capital of Belgium appeared gay and undisturbed, as if that dreaded man had still remained an inmate of the Tuileries. The day passed, and rumour was busy; but until the arrival of the Prince of Orange in the evening, nothing was known beyond there having been an affair between the outposts. The Duke, after receiving his illustrious visitor, resumed his place at the dinner-table; when shortly afterwards, General Muffling, the Prussian General attached to the British army, "came into the room, with evident marks of having proceeded hastily, when a chair was reached, and he was placed next to his Grace,

with whom he entered into close conversation, and delivered some official despatches. The Duke occasionally addressed himself to Sir T. Picton. The movements of the enemy created no surprise, all was quiet and regular, the decisive moment for action was not yet come.

"The second courier arrived from Blucher before twelve o'clock on the night of the 15th, and the despatches were delivered to the Duke of Wellington in the ball-room of the Duchess of Richmond. While he was reading them he seemed to be completely absorbed by their contents; and after he had finished, for some minutes he remained in the same attitude of deep reflection, totally abstracted from every surrounding object, while his countenance was expressive of fixed and intense thought. He was heard to mutter to himself—'Marshal Blucher thinks,'—'It is Marshal Blucher's opinion;'—and after remaining thus abstracted a few minutes, and having apparently formed his decision, he gave his usual clear and concise orders to one of his staff-officers, who instantly left the room, and was again as gay and animated as ever; he stayed supper, and then went home."[1]

But before the ball had ended, the strains of courtly music were drowned in the louder "note of preparation." The drum had beat to arms, the bugle sounded "the assembly," and the Highland bagpipe added its wild and martial summons to the field. All were already prepared, all were promptly under arms—and the 5th division filed from the Parc with the corps of Brunswick Oels, and directed their march through the forest of Soignies.

Eight o'clock pealed from the steeple clocks; all was quiet—the brigades, with their artillery and equipages, were gone—the crash of music was heard no longer—the bustle of preparation had ceased—and an ominous and

[1] Booth's Narrative.

heart-sinking silence succeeded that noise and hurry which ever attends a departure for the field of battle.

While Napoleon with his right and centre was attacking the front of the Prussian position, Grouchy manœuvred by the Namur road upon its flank, and simultaneously, the 1st and 2d corps, with four cavalry divisions, were turned against the British positions. When Blucher on the evening of the 15th had been deforced at Charleroi, the advanced corps of the Prince of Orange had also been driven back from Frasnes—but a fresh brigade was promptly moved up—and before the morning of the 16th, the greater portion of the ground had been recovered.

Early in the afternoon, Ney's attack was made with the vigour and determination which superior numbers encourage—and it was gallantly and successfully repulsed. But physical force gradually prevailed—the Hanoverians fell back—the Bois de Bossu was occupied by the enemy—and when the leading regiments of the 5th division reached Quatre Bras, with reduced strength the Prince of Orange was bravely but feebly opposing assailants, encouraged by success, and whose superiority could no longer be resisted.

A march of more than twenty miles, executed in sultry weather, and over a country where little water was procurable, had abated the vigour of the British brigades, but their spirit was indomitable. The Duke of Wellington had overtaken the column in its march; and when he reached Quatre Bras, at a glance he saw the critical position of the day, and instantly directed that the Bois de Bossu should be regained.

Ney, whose infantry doubled that of his opponent, sustained by a proportionate artillery, and the fine cavalry division under Excelmans, was pushing his advantages to their crisis. Checked, however, by the arrival of the British battalions, he strove to crush them before they could deploy—and, under a withering fire of artillery, to

which the weak Hanoverian batteries ineffectively replied, he launched his cavalry against the regiments as they reached their battle-ground; all was in his favour, his horsemen were in hand, the rye-crop, reaching breast high, covered the advance, and the charges were made before the regiments were established. But English discipline and courage rose superior to the immense advantages which circumstances conferred upon their assailants—and in every effort the enemy was roughly repelled. Lancers and cuirassiers were driven back with desperate slaughter —while whole squadrons, shattered in their retreat, and leaving the ground covered with their dead and dying, proved with what fatal precision the British squares sustained their fusilade.

The efforts of the French to break the squares were fierce and frequent. Their batteries poured upon these unflinching soldiers a storm of grape, and when an opening was made by the cannon the lancers were ready to rush upon the devoted infantry. But nothing could daunt the lion-hearted English—nothing could shake their steadiness. The dead were coolly removed, and the living occupied their places. Though numbers fell, and the square momentarily diminished, it still presented a serried line of glittering bayonets, through which lancer and cuirassier vainly endeavoured to penetrate.

One regiment,[1] after sustaining a furious cannonade, was suddenly, and on three different sides, assailed by cavalry. Two faces of the square were charged by the lancers, while the cuirassiers galloped down upon another. It was a trying moment. There was a death-like silence; and one voice alone, clear and calm, was heard. It was their colonel's, who called upon them to be "steady." On came the enemy!—the earth shook beneath the horsemen's feet; while on every side of the devoted band, the corn bending

[1] Twenty-eighth.

beneath the rush of cavalry disclosed their numerous assailants. The lance blades approached the bayonets of the kneeling front rank—the cuirassiers were within forty paces—yet not a trigger was drawn. But, when the word "Fire!" thundered from the colonel's lips, each face poured out its deadly volley—and in a moment the leading files of the French lay before the square, as if hurled by a thunderbolt to the earth. The assailants, broken and dispersed, galloped off for shelter to the tall rye, while a stream of musketry from the British square carried death into the retreating squadrons.

But numbers were certain to prevail. The regiments fought with devoted heroism; and though miserably reduced they still held their ground with a desperate tenacity. Far overmatched, the result was tottering in the balance; and nothing but the bull-dog courage of English soldiers could have resisted the desperate pressure. The contest was at its height—the incessant assaults of the enemy were wasting the British regiments, but, with the exception of the Bois de Bossu, not an inch of ground was lost. The men were falling by hundreds—death was busy everywhere—but not a cheek blanched, and not a foot receded! The courage of these undaunted soldiers needed no incitement—but on the contrary, the efforts of their officers were constantly required to restrain the burning ardour that would, if unrepressed, have led to ruinous results. Maddened to see their ranks thinned by renewed assaults, which they were merely suffered to repel, they panted for the hour of action. The hot blood of Erin was boiling for revenge—and even the cool endurance of the Scotch began to yield, and a murmur was sometimes heard of, "Why are we not led forward?"

At this juncture the division of Guards, under General Maitland, arrived from Enghien, and after a march of fifteen hours, without anything to eat or drink, they gallantly advanced to the charge, and in half an hour completely cleared

the wood. Though they became masters of the Bois de Bossu, they found difficulty in emerging from its shelter. As often as they attempted to come out, a tremendous fire of round and grape shot was opened by the French batteries, followed by a charge of cavalry. When they retired, and the enemy endeavoured to penetrate the wood, they were received in turn with a steady and well-directed volley of musketry, which compelled them also to return. These alternate attacks continued for nearly three hours. At one time, the enemy was furiously encountered by a square of Black Brunswickers, while the British, rapidly lining the ditches, kept up a most destructive fire—but the loss was very severe, and the men found great difficulty in forming line again. The undismayed gallantry of the Guards was the more remarkable as they were composed chiefly of young soldiers, and volunteers from the militia, who had never been in action. Some of these noble fellows were so overcome with fatigue, that when they entered the wood, they sunk down, and had only sufficient strength to cheer their comrades to the onset. The carnage was dreadful—the conflict obstinately maintained on either side—the French, from their superiority in cavalry and artillery, committing a slaughter which was well repaid by the terrible fire of the British musketry.

Evening was now closing in; the attacks of the enemy became fewer and feebler; a brigade of heavy cavalry and horse artillery came up, and, worn out by the sanguinary struggle of six long hours, the assailants ceased their attack, and the 5th division with the 3d and the Guards took up a position for the night on the ground their unbounded heroism had held through this bloody day.

Ney fell back upon the road to Frasnes. The moon rose angrily—still a few cannon shot were heard after daylight had departed; but gradually they ceased. The fires were lighted, and such miserable provisions as could be

procured, were furnished to the harassed soldiery; and, while strong pickets were posted in the front and flanks, the remnant of the British, and their brave allies, piled arms and stretched themselves on the battle field.

The loss sustained by the British and their allies in this glorious and hard-contested battle amounted to 3750 *hors de combat.* Of course the British suffered most severely, having 316 men killed, and 2156 wounded. The Duke of Brunswick fell in the act of rallying his troops, and an immense number of British officers were found among the slain and wounded. During an advanced movement the 92d, after repulsing an attack of both cavalry and infantry, was retreating to the wood, when a French column halted and turned its fire on the Highlanders, already assailed by a superior force. Notwithstanding, the regiment bravely held its ground until relieved by a regiment of the Guards, when it retired to its original position. In this brief and sanguinary conflict, its loss amounted to 28 officers and nearly 300 men.

The casualties, when compared with the number of the combatants, will appear enormous. Most of the battalions lost their commanding officers—and the rapid succession of subordinate officers on whom the command devolved, told how fast the work of death went on. Trifling wounds were disregarded—and men severely hurt refused to retire to the rear, and rejoined their colours after a temporary dressing.

Like that at Quatre Bras, the conflict at Ligny only closed with daylight. For five hours the struggle had been obstinately continued. Men fell by hundreds, and 200 pieces of artillery were turned against the devoted villages, for whose possession Napoleon and Blucher were contending. Both generals pushed their reserves freely into action; and as soon as one battalion was destroyed, another came forward, and mounting over the dead and dying, charged through the blazing houses of Ligny and St. Amand. At four o'clock the fortune of the day was so doubtful, that

Napoleon hastily called up the 1st corps, which Ney had also despatched an aide-de-camp to hurry to his assistance at Quatre Bras. Night came on—no decisive advantage had been gained—and Blucher, like a wounded lion,[1] although with feebler strength, seemed to fight with additional ferocity.

Darkness, however, enabled Napoleon to carry a village which he had assailed throughout the evening so frequently and furiously, but in vain. In the gloom, a division of French infantry, by a circuitous march, gained the rear of the Prussian corps, while a mass of cuirassiers forced a road at the other side of Ligny. These movements obliged the Prussians to fall back; and they retired leisurely towards Tilly, repelling every attack, and leaving nothing to the enemy but a ruined village, some wounded men, and a few disabled guns, which the state of the roads prevented them from removing.

At daybreak of the 17th the whole of the allies were up and ready to accept battle; but as the Duke of Wellington had been apprised during the night that Blucher had retreated to unite himself with his 4th corps, and concentrate his army on the Wavre, it was necessary for the allied commander to maintain his communication with the Prussians, and make a corresponding movement; and

[1] "In one of these charges Blucher nearly closed his illustrious career. Heading a regiment of cavalry, which failed in its attack, his horse was wounded, and galloped furiously forward, till it dropped down dead. The Marshal fell under it, and could not be immediately extricated, for the enemy were pursuing. The last Prussian horseman had passed him, as he lay senseless on the ground; but his aide-de-camp, Lieut.-Colonel Count Nostiz, gallantly determining to share the fate of his general, cast himself by his side, and covered him with his military cloak, that he might not be recognised. The French cuirassiers rode rapidly by; the flying Prussians suddenly rallied, attacked their pursuers, and they again passed him in their retreat. The opportunity was instantly seized, and the veteran hero mounting a dragoon horse, escaped from his imminent peril."—*Mudford.*

accordingly he determined to fall back on a position already chosen, in front of the village of WATERLOO.

Napoleon was mistaken in supposing that Blucher intended to rally his *corps d'armée* round Namur, for the Marshal, with a sounder judgment, took a line of retreat parallel to what he considered must be that of the Duke of Wellington, who he knew would fall back from Quatre Bras on ascertaining the regressive movements of his Prussian ally. Uncertain as to the route which Blucher had selected, Grouchy's corps, with the cavalry of Pajol and Excelmans, were detached in pursuit, while Napoleon in person hastened his march to bring Wellington to action, and reached Frasnes at nine o'clock on the morning of the 17th.

The non-arrival of the 6th corps and reserve, however, obliged Napoleon to delay his intended attack until the whole of his corps were on the ground—and his able opponent was in the interval eluding a combat which he had determined to refuse, and retreating leisurely to the position on which he had resolved to accept a battle. This operation in open day was difficult, as the Dyle was in the rear of the allies, and the long and narrow bridge at the village of Genappe, the only mean by which the *corps d'armée* could effect its passage. Wellington disposed some horse-artillery and dismounted dragoons upon the heights, and leaving a strong rearguard in front of Quatre Bras, he succeeded in masking his retreat until, when discovered, it was too late to offer any serious interruption to the regressive movement of the allies.

Napoleon had already made the necessary dispositions, and his columns were formed for attack, when, from the heights above Frasnes, he discovered that nothing was in front but a rearguard. His cavalry were instantly ordered to pursue—and at Genappe the rival horsemen came in contact. The 7th Hussars and some squadrons of the 11th and 23d Light Dragoons charged without success. Lord

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Uxbridge, however, repeated the attack with the Life Guards, and the French cavalry were so roughly repelled, that, with the exception of a partial cannonade, too distant to produce effect, the allied columns fell back to their position without farther interruption.

Throughout the day, rain had fallen heavily at times; and as the evening closed, the weather became wild and stormy. The wind was violent, the rain increased, thunder rolled and lightning flashed vividly; and a more cheerless bivouac than the allied, was never occupied by an army before a fearful conflict.

While the troops reposed on the battle-field, the Duke of Wellington, with his general officers and their respective staffs, occupied the village of Waterloo. On the doors of the several cottages the names of the principal officers were chalked—"and frail and perishing as was the record, it was found there long after many of those whom it designated had ceased to exist!"

The position which Wellington took up was most judiciously selected. It extended along the front of the forest of Soignies, near the point where the Brussels road is intersected by that from Nivelles. At this point stands the hamlet of Mont St. Jean; and at the debouche of the forest, the village of Waterloo is built. The French adopted the former as their designation of the battle of the 18th of June; the latter, however, was chosen by the conqueror, to give a name to his last, and his most glorious victory.

Early in the morning the dispositions of the allies were completed. The British right reclined on a ravine near Merke Braine, and the left rested upon a height above Ter la Haye. The whole line was formed on a gentle acclivity, the flanks partially secured by small hollows and broken grounds. The farm-house of La Haye Sainte, in front of the left centre, was defended by a Hanoverian battalion—and the chateau of Hougomont, in advance of

the right centre, was held by a party of the Guards and some companies of Nassau riflemen. Wellington considered this to be the key of his position, and great attention was bestowed upon its defence. In addition to its natural advantages, the walls were crenellated to afford perfect facility for the musketry and rifles of its defenders. Behind this chain of posts the first line, composed of Wellington's finest battalions, was formed. The second was rather in a hollow, and partially sheltered from the enemy's artillery. The third, composed of cavalry, was in the rear, extending nearly to Ter la Haye.

At the extreme right, the British army obliqued to Merke Braine, and defended the road to Nivelles. The extreme left was in communication with the Prussians by the road to Ohain, leading through the passes of St. Lambert. A corps of observation, under Sir Charles Colville, comprising a large portion of the 4th division, was stationed at Halle, to defend the British right, if attacked, and cover Brussels if it should be turned. Cooke's division (the Guards), occupying a rising ground beside Hougomont, with its right rested on the Nivelles road. Alten's division was formed behind La Haye Sainte, with its left on the road of Charleroi. The Brunswickers were partly in line with the Guards and partly in reserve; and one of their battalions was extended in the wood of Hougomont, *en tirailleur*.

On the left, Picton's division, Lambert's brigade, a Hanoverian corps, and some Dutch troops, extended along the lane and hedge which traverse the undulating ground between Ter la Haye and the road to Charleroi; and the village itself, that of Smohain, and the farm of Papilotte, adjoining the wood of Frichermont, was garrisoned by Nassau troops, under the command of the Prince of Weimar.

No part of the allied position was remarkable for natural strength; but where the ground displayed any advantages,

they had been made available for defence. The surface of the field of Waterloo was perfectly open—the acclivities of easy descent—and the whole had an English appearance of unenclosed corn-fields, in some places divided by a hedge. Infantry movements could be easily effected, artillery might advance and retire, and cavalry could charge. On every point the British position was assailable; and the island soldier had no reliance but in "God and his Grace"—for all else depended on his own stout heart and vigorous arm.

The morning of the 18th was wet and gloomy, but as the day advanced, the weather gradually improved. From the allied position the French were distinctly seen as they came up, forming columns, and making the other preparatory dispositions for a battle. The British divisions were equally exposed to the enemy's view; and when the different brigades were discovered getting into battle order, Napoleon exhibited mingled feelings of satisfaction and surprise, exclaiming to one of his staff—"*Ah! je les tiens donc ces Anglais!*"

About nine o'clock the French dispositions were commenced, and at half-past eleven they were completed. The 1st corps (D'Erlon's) were formed in front of La Haye Sainte, its right extended towards Frichermont, and its left resting on the Brussels road. The 2d corps, leaving its right on D'Erlon's left, extended itself in the direction of Hougomont with a wood in front. Behind these corps was the cavalry reserve of cuirassiers, the grand reserve, consisting of the Imperial Guard, occupying the heights of La Belle Alliance. The 6th corps, under Count Lobau, with the cavalry of D'Aumont, were left in the rear of the French right, to observe the Prussians in the event of their debouching by the Ohain road, through the defiles of Saint Lambert.

Napoleon's own position was with his reserve. There, with his hands behind him, he paced back and forward,

issuing orders, and observing the progress of his attack. As the battle became more doubtful, he approached nearer the scene of action, and betrayed increased impatience to his staff by violent gesticulation, and using immense quantities of snuff. At three o'clock he was on horseback in front of La Belle Alliance; and in the evening, just before he made his last attempt with the Guard, he had reached a hollow close to La Haye Sainte. Wellington, at the opening of the engagement, stood upon a ridge immediately behind La Haye, but as the conflict thickened, where difficulties arose and danger threatened, there the Duke was found. He traversed the field exposed to a storm of balls, and passed from point to point uninjured, and more than on one occasion, when the French cavalry charged the British squares, the Duke was there for shelter.

The strength of the British and French armies has been variously and very differently stated. The former, including its corps of observation, which were non-combatant on the 18th, with the Brunswickers, Belgians, and Nassau contingent, amounted to 74,400. The force of the latter (French), from the contradictory statements, is difficult to be determined with accuracy—probably 90,000 would be nearly its amount. Taking its original strength at 145,000, deducting 10,000 *hors de combat* in the battles of the 15th and 16th, and reckoning Grouchy's corps at 45,000, we shall find that 90,000 Frenchmen were on the field of Waterloo. Certainly Buonaparte was equal in men, and very superior in artillery;—the French parks, amounting to 296 pieces, while the British and Belgian guns did not exceed 150.

After a careful reconnaissance, Napoleon determined that the centre of the Allies was the most vulnerable point of the allied position; and he directed his 2d corps to advance and carry the important post of Hougomont.

This place, destined to obtain a glorious celebrity, was an old-fashioned country house, and had once been the residence of a Flemish nobleman. It stood on low ground about three hundred yards in front of the right centre of the allied line, and close to where it leaned upon the road leading from Nevilles to Waterloo. On one side there was a large farm-yard and out-building; on the other, a garden, surrounded by a high brick wall. An open wood, covering an area of some three or four acres, encircled the chateau; but as it was free from copse, and the trees stood apart from each other, it only masked the post without adding much to its strength. In this wood some Nassau riflemen were stationed. The house and garden was occupied by the light companies of the Coldstream and 3d Guards. A detachment of the 1st battalion was posted in the wood upon the left; and the remainder on a small eminence immediately in the rear of the chateau, as a support to the troops who garrisoned the house and defended the enclosures. The whole force, to which the key of the Duke's position was entrusted, did not exceed 1800 men, of whom 300 were Nassau sharpshooters. The troops in the house were commanded by Lieut.-Colonel Macdonnell; and those in the wood by Lord Saltoun.

Shortly before eleven o'clock, the enemy's columns were put in motion against Hougomont—and the battle of Waterloo began. Comprising three divisions, nearly thirty thousand strong, the French attack was made in close columns, supported by the fire of numerous batteries, and the effect was grand and imposing beyond description. As the heads of the enemy's masses rose above the hollow ground which had hitherto concealed their movement, the British artillery opened with round and case shot; and the French and Nassau light troops commenced a sharp and rapid fusilade. But the latter was forced to yield to numbers—the wood was carried—and the chateau

and its dependencies were vigorously and resolutely assaulted.

But the defence was able as it was obstinate. On the French masses the fire of the British musketry fell with rapid precision; and the perseverance of the enemy only produced a bloodier discomfiture. The French gave ground—the Guards charged from the enclosures—part of the wood was recovered—and the fire of the British howitzers cleared the remainder of it from the enemy.

The repulse of Joseph's corps was followed by a tremendous cannonade,—for on both sides every gun, which would bear, had opened. The fire was furiously continued. Heavy bodies of cavalry were seen in motion; and it was easy to foresee that this terrible cannonade would be followed by more desperate and more extended efforts.

On perceiving the French cavalry displayed, the Duke ordered his centre divisions to form squares by battalions; but as this formation exposed them to the fire of the French artillery, they were withdrawn to the reverse of the slope, and there found shelter from a cannonade still fiercely kept up, and as fatally returned from the allied batteries, whose service all through that trying day was remarkable for its precision and rapidity.

The French attacks were again renewed against Hougomont—but they were as unavailing as they had proved before. Their artillery fire, however, had become too oppressive to be sustained; the Duke ordered fresh batteries forward to keep it under; and every new effort of the enemy increased the slaughter, but failed in either abating the spirit or the obstinacy of the defence.

At last despairing of success, the French artillery opened with shells upon the house—the old tower of Hougomont was quickly in a blaze—the fire reached the chapel, and many of the wounded, both assailants and defenders, there perished miserably. But still, though the flames raged

above, shells burst around, and shot ploughed through the shattered walls and windows, the Guards nobly held the place, and Hougomont remained untaken.

While these terrible attacks were continued against the right centre, the left of the allied position was also furiously assailed. The recession of the English regiments behind the crest in front of which they had been previously formed, appears to have misled Napoleon—and a movement intended only to shelter the infantry from the French guns, was supposed to have been made with an intention of retreating. Under this belief Napoleon ordered his 1st corps forward, to fall on that part of the position extending between La Haye Sainte and Ter la Haye.

Shortly before two, D'Erlon advanced, drove a Belgian brigade roughly back, and the head of his columns reached the broken edge that partially marked the 5th division. After repulsing the cavalry, Picton formed line, and moved Kempt's and Pack's brigades forward to meet the anticipated attack. The heads of the enemy's columns were already within forty yards, when the musketry of the 5th division delivered a rolling volley that annihilated the leading sections and produced a visible confusion. Picton saw and seized the crisis, and thundered the word "Charge!" It was the last he uttered—for the next moment a musket bullet perforated his forehead, and he dropped from his saddle a dead man.

The division, however, obeyed the order of their fallen chief, charged through the hedge, and routed their assailants. It was one of those moments which a battle presents, and which, when seized on, restores the fortunes of a doubtful field, and not unfrequently, snatches an unexpected victory. The 2d cavalry brigade was immediately behind the 5th division, forming a line of 1300 broadswords. Lord Anglesea observing that the French cuirassiers and lancers were preparing for a flank attack upon the British infantry, led on

the heavy cavalry—and the Royals, Greys, and Enniskilleners charged with a vigour and effect that bore down every opposition. In vain mailed cuirassier and formidable lancer met these splendid horsemen. They were overwhelmed; and the French infantry, already broken and disorganised by the 5th division, fell in hundreds beneath the swords of the English dragoons. The eagles of the 45th and 105th regiments, and upwards of two thousand prisoners, were the trophies of this brilliant exploit.

In cavalry encounters, whether success or defeat attend the charge, to a greater or a less degree the assailants must be disorganised; and acting as the 2d brigade did at Waterloo, against an arm immeasurably superior, the splendid onset of the British dragoons was eventually repulsed; and in turn, they were obliged to yield to the attack of horsemen whose order was unbroken. Many gallant officers and soldiers fell—and none more regretted than their chivalrous leader, Sir William Ponsonby. "Having cut through the first column, he passed on to where Colonel Dorville was so hotly engaged, and found himself outflanked by a regiment of Polish lancers, in a newly-ploughed field, the ground of which was so soft, that the horse could not extricate itself. He was attended by only one aide-de-camp. At that instant, a body of lancers approached him at full speed. His own death he knew was inevitable, but supposing that his aide-de-camp might escape he drew forth the picture of his lady, and his watch, and was in the act of delivering them to his care, to be conveyed to his wife and family, when the enemy came up, and they were both speared upon the spot. His body was afterwards found lying beside his horse, and pierced with seven wounds. It is said, however, that he did not fall unrevenged, for the brigade he commanded had an opportunity before the battle ceased of again encountering the Polish lancers, almost every one of whom was cut to pieces."[1]

[1] Mudford.

An attack had been simultaneously made by part of D'Erlon's division on the farm-house of La Haye Sainte, which had been repelled by the Germans under Baron Alten; and they, in turn, were charged by Milhaud's cuirassiers. But forming square, steadily and rapidly, their assailants galloped on without breaking a battalion, and suffered a heavy loss from the musketry of some regiments diagonally placed, whose fire was closely and coolly delivered. Passing the intervals between the squares, the French cuirassiers topped the crest behind the British infantry. This chivalrous act was recompensed by nothing but its daring; for, before a splendid charge of the Life Guards, Blues, and 1st Dragoon Guards, that celebrated cavalry whose prowess had turned the tide of many a doubtful field, gave way; and in the *mêlée*, hand to hand, steel helmet and cuirass proved no protection against the stalwart arm of the English trooper. The conflict was short and severe; and Milhaud's cavalry were deforced and driven into the valley.

Another and more determined attack was made about this period of the battle upon Hougomont—but the Duke had reinforced the weakened garrison—and favoured by the cover which the houses and enclosures afforded, the fresh assault failed totally. The obstinacy with which Napoleon endeavoured to win this important post, may be best estimated by the terrible expenditure of life his repeated attacks occasioned. Eight thousand men were rendered *hors de combat* in these attempts; and when evening and defeat came, the burning ruins were still in the possession of those gallant soldiers who had held them nobly against so many and so desperate attacks.

It was strange that throughout the sanguinary struggle but one success crowned the incessant efforts of Napoleon—the temporary possession of the farm-house of La Haye Sainte. "Its defence had been entrusted to Colonel Baring, with a

detachment of the German legion, amounting to about three hundred men, subsequently reinforced by two hundred more. The attack began at one o'clock, and continued above two hours. Several guns were brought to bear upon the house —but the conflict was chiefly maintained by massy columns of infantry, who advanced with such fury, that they actually grasped at the rifles of the besieged as they projected through the loopholes. Four successive attempts were thus made, and three times the assailants were gallantly beaten off. Twice the enemy succeeded in setting fire to a barn or out-house, contiguous to the main building—but both times it was fortunately extinguished. The numbers of the garrison, at length, began to diminish—many were either killed or wounded—and at the same time their ammunition was failing. It became impossible to supply the one, or reinforce the other, for there was no practicable communication with the rest of the army. The men, reduced to five cartridges each, were enjoined to be not only sparing of their fire, but to aim well. A fourth attack was now made, by two columns, stronger than either of the preceding, and the enemy soon perceived that the garrison could not return a shot. Emboldened by this discovery, they instantly rushed forward, and burst open one of the doors; but a desperate resistance was still made with the sword-bayonet, through the windows and embrasures. They then ascended the walls and roof, whence they securely fired down upon their adversaries. This unequal conflict could not long continue, and after an heroic defence the post was surrendered. It is affirmed that the French sacrificed to their revenge every man whom they found in the place. It is at least certain, that some individuals were most barbarously treated. The shattered and dilapidated state of the house, after the battle, conspicuously evinced the furious efforts which the enemy made for its possession, and the desperate courage displayed in its defence. The door was perforated by innumerable shot-

holes; the roof destroyed by shells and cannon balls; there was scarcely the vestige of a window discernible, and the whole edifice exhibited a melancholy scene of ravage and desolation. Yet when obtained, it offered no advantage commensurate to the loss with which it had been purchased; for the artillery, on an adjacent ridge, continued to pour down such a destructive and incessant fire, that Napoleon could make but little use of the conquest to promote his subsequent operations."[1]

Still the situation of the allied army became every moment more critical—its own glorious efforts exhausting its strength, and every noble repulse rendering it less capable of continuing what seemed to prove an endless resistance. Though masses of the enemy had fallen, thousands came on anew. With desperate attachment, the French army pressed forward at Napoleon's command; and while each advance terminated in defeat and slaughter, fresh battalions crossed the valley, and, mounting the ridge with cries of *Vive l'Empereur!* exhibited a devotion which never has been equalled. Wellington's reserves had gradually been brought into action; and the left, though but partially engaged, dared not, weakened, to send assistance to the right and centre. Many battalions were miserably reduced, and presented but skeletons of what these beautiful brigades had been when they left Brussels two days before. The loss of individual regiments was prodigious. One[2] had 400 men mowed down in square without drawing a trigger: it lost almost all its officers; and a subaltern commanded it for half the day. Another,[3] when not 200 men were left, rushed into a French column and routed it with the bayonet; a third,[4] when nearly annihilated, sent to require support: none could be given, and the commanding officer was told that he must "stand or fall where he was!"

[1] Mudford.
[2] Twenty-seventh.
[3] Ninety-second
[4] Thirty-third.

No wonder that Wellington almost despaired. He calculated, and justly, that he had an army who would perish where they stood—but when he saw the devastation caused by the incessant attacks of an enemy, who appeared determined to succeed, is it surprising that his watch was frequently consulted, and that he prayed for night or Blucher?

Evening came, and yet no crisis. Napoleon, astounded by the terrible repulses which had attended his most desperate attacks, began to dread that the day would have an unfavourable issue, and that Soult's estimate of the stubborn endurance of the English infantry might prove fatally correct. Wellington, as he viewed the diminished numbers of his brave battalions, still presenting the same fearless attitude that they had done when the battle opened, still felt that to human endurance there is a limit; and turned his glass repeatedly to that direction from which his expected support must come. At times, also, the temper of the troops had nearly failed; and, particularly among the Irish regiments, the reiterated question of "When shall we get at them?" showed how ardent the wish was to avoid inactive slaughter, and, plunging into the columns of the assailants, to avenge the death of their companions. But the "Be cool, my boys!" from their officers was sufficient to restrain this impatience—and, cumbering the ground with their dead, they waited with desperate intrepidity for the hour to arrive when victory and vengeance should be their own!

At last, the welcome sound of distant artillery was heard in the direction of St. Lambert, and a staff officer reported that the head of the Prussian column was already in the Bois de Paris. Advised therefore, that his gallant ally would presently come into action, the Duke made fresh preparations to repel what he properly anticipated would be the last and the most desperate effort of his opponent.

Satisfied that his right flank was secure, Lord Hill was directed to send Clinton's division, with Mitchell's brigade,

and a Hanoverian corps from the extreme right, towards the centre, which the reinforcement of Hougomont, by the removal of Byng's brigade, had weakened. Chassé's Dutch division was also moved to the lower ground from Braine la Leud as a support to the right of the position; and, subsequently, the light cavalry of Vandeleur and Vivian were both brought forward; and where danger was apprehended care was taken to have a sufficient force in hand to meet the storm which was presently about to burst.

It is said that Napoleon felt assured that the cannonade which announced Blucher's advance was only the fire of Grouchy's guns, who, in obedience to his repeated orders, had reached the battle-ground alone, or was advancing, *pari passu*, and holding Bulow's corps in check. This intelligence was rapidly conveyed along the line; and, to a soldiery easily exhilarated, victory appeared certain, and preparations were made for what was believed to be a final and triumphal attack. But the illusion was brief. The Prussians debouched from the wood at Frichermont—and half Napoleon's right wing was thrown back, *en potence*, to check their attack, while his last grand movement should be executed against the allied army in his front.

While Napoleon directed that great effort which he anxiously hoped might prove decisive, the British infantry, who held the threatened point, were laid down on the reverse of the crest they occupied, to obtain shelter from the enemy's artillery. With its proverbial intrepidity, the Imperial Guard, in close column, came on to the assault—and nothing could be more imposing than the steadiness with which they ascended the slope of the position, although the fire of the British guns fell upon their dense masses with ruinous precision. The British Guards moved forward to the crest of the height; and the finest infantry in the world confronted each other at the distance of fifty paces. The cheers of the French formed a striking contrast

to the soldier-like silence with which the English received the attack; and shouts of *Vive l'Empereur!* was only answered by a rolling volley. The first steady fire of the British Guards disorganised the crowded column—and the fusilade was rapidly and steadily sustained. Vain efforts were made by the French officers to deploy, and the feeble fire of their leading files was returned by a stream of musketry that carried death into ranks in close formation, and every moment increased their disorder. The word to charge was given—the Guards cheered, and came forward—but the enemy declined the contest, and the shattered column hurried down the hill, with the precipitate confusion attendant on a heavy repulse. After routing their opponents, the victorious infantry halted, reformed, fell back, and resumed their former position.

Nor was the attack of Napoleon's second column more fortunate. After repelling the attack of the first column of the Imperial Guard, Maitland's brigade brought its left shoulders forward to meet the second column, which was now advancing, while Adams's brigade, pivoted on its left, moved its right wing rapidly on, having Bolton's troop of artillery in the angle, where the right of the Guards touched the left flank of the light brigade. Undismayed by the repulse of the first column, the second topped the height in perfect order, and with a confidence which bespoke the certainty of success. But the musketry of Maitland's left wing smote the column heavily in front; and the fire of the light regiments fell, with terrible effect, on the flank of a mass already torn and disordered by the close discharge of grape and case shot from the British battery. The ground in a few minutes was covered with dead and wounded men—the confusion increased—the disorder became irremediable. To stand that intolerable fire was madness—they broke—and, like the first column, endeavoured to reach the low ground, where, sheltered from this slaughtering fusilade, they

could have probably reorganised their broken array. But this was not permitted. Then came the hour of British triumph. The magic word was spoken—"Up, Guards, and at them!" In a moment the household brigade were on their feet: then waiting till the French closed, they delivered a tremendous volley, cheered and rushed forward with the bayonet, Wellington in person directing the attack. Pressed by the Guards—charged by the 52d—retreat became a flight, and Wellington completed the *deroute* by launching the cavalry of Vivian and Vandeleur against the mass, as it rushed down the hill in hopeless disorder.

This, indeed, was the crisis of the battle. The Prussian demonstration, slight at first, had latterly become more dangerous and decided. The whole of the 4th corps had now got up, with Pirch's division of the 2d, and Ziethen's column appeared on the right flank of the French, and rendered Count Lobau's position still more critical. The discomfiture of Ney's attack had produced over the French corps a general unsteadiness; and before it was possible to rally and renew the fight, one grand and general attack decided the doubtful field, and consummated the ruin of Napoleon.

As the French right gradually receded, the allied line converging from its extreme points at Marke Braine and Braine la Leud, became compressed in extent, and assumed rather the appearance of a crescent. The marked impression of Blucher's attack—the approach of Ziethen by the Ohain road—and the bloody repulse inflicted on the Imperial Guard, all told Wellington that the hour was come, and that to strike boldly was to secure a victory. The word was given to advance. The infantry, in one long and splendid line, moved forward with a thrilling cheer—the horse artillery galloped up, and opened with case shot on the disordered masses, which, but a brief space before, had advanced with such imposing resolution. Instantly,

the allied cavalry were let loose; and, charging headlong into the enemy's columns, they turned retreat into rout, and closed the history of one of the bloodiest struggles upon record.

For a short time, four battalions of the Old Guard, comprising the only reserve which Napoleon had left unemployed, formed square, and checked the movements of the cavalry. But, panic-stricken and disorganised, the French resistance was short and feeble. The Prussian cannon thundered in their rear; the British bayonet was flashing in their front; and, unable to stand the terror of the charge, they broke and fled. A dreadful and indiscriminate carnage ensued. The great road was choked with the equipage, and cumbered with the dead and dying; while the fields, as far as the eye could reach, were covered with a host of helpless fugitives. Courage and discipline were forgotten. Napoleon's army of yesterday was now a splendid wreck. His own words best describe it—"It was a total rout!"

The last gleam of fading sunshine fell upon the rout of Waterloo. The finest army, for its numbers, that France had ever embattled in a field was utterly defeated; and the dynasty of that proud spirit, for whom Europe was too little, was ended.

Night came: but it brought no respite to the shattered army of Napoleon; and the moon rose upon the "broken host" to light the victors to their prey. The British, forgetting their fatigue, pressed on the rear of the flying enemy; and the roads, covered with the dead and dying, and obstructed by broken equipages and deserted guns, became almost impassable to the fugitives—and hence the slaughter from Waterloo to Genappe was frightful. But, wearied with blood (for the French, throwing away their arms to expedite their flight, offered no resistance), and exhausted with hunger and fatigue, the British pursuit

relaxed, and between Rossome and Genappe it ceased altogether. The infantry bivouacked for the night around the farm-houses of Caillou and Belle Alliance, and the light cavalry halted one mile further on, abandoning the work of death to their fresher and more sanguinary allies. Nothing, indeed, could surpass the desperate and unrelenting animosity of the Prussians towards the French. Repose and plunder were sacrificed to revenge: the memory of former defeat, insult and oppression, now produced a dreadful retaliation, and overpowered every feeling of humanity. The *væ victis* was pronounced, and thousands beside those who perished in the field, fell that night beneath the Prussian lance and sabre. In vain a feeble effort was made by the French to barricade the streets of Genappe, and interrupt the progress of the conquerors. Blucher forced the passage with his cannon; and so entirely had the defeat of Waterloo extinguished the spirit and destroyed the discipline of the remnant of Napoleon's army, that the wild hurrah of the pursuers, or the very blast of a Prussian trumpet, became the signal for flight and terror.

It was a singular accident, that near La Belle Alliance the victorious generals met; for thither, Blucher, on forcing the French right, had urged forward his columns in pursuit. Comparatively fresh, the Prussians engaged to follow up the victory—and the allies left the great road open, and bivouacked on the field.

By moonlight, Wellington recrossed the battle-ground, and arrived for supper at Brussels—an honour which Napoleon had promised to confer upon that ancient city. The excited feelings which such a victory must have produced, are said to have suffered a reaction, and given way to deep despondency, as he rode past "the dying and the dead." God knows, it was "a sorry sight"—for on a

surface, not exceeding two square miles, fifty thousand dead or disabled men and horses were extended.

Many of Wellington's victories were as decisive, but he had never inflicted a defeat so terrible as that of Waterloo. At Salamanca, after the dispersion of Marmont's rear-guard on the heights of La Serna, scarcely a prisoner was made; and in a few days, every French soldier, save those left upon the battle-field, had returned to their colours, and the army, reorganised anew, was ready for immediate service. At Vittoria, the enemy were utterly *derouted*, and not a gun or equipage was saved; but the men and horses, which constitute the most valuable portion of a park, escaped—the scattered soldiers rallied in the rear—and Soult's subsequent operations gave a convincing proof, how rapidly his losses had been replaced, and his army had been made effective. But at Waterloo, the disaster went beyond a remedy. That matchless corps,[1] whose prowess had decided many a doubtful day, were almost annihilated, the cavalry completely ruined—the artillery abandoned—and if the number be computed, including those left upon the battle-ground, sabred in the pursuit, captured on the field, or made prisoners by the Prussians, with the still greater portion of fugitives who disbanded on entering France, and returned to their respective homes—the total losses sustained by Napoleon and consequent on his defeat at Waterloo, cannot in round numbers amount to less than forty thousand men.

The victory of Waterloo was decisive, and every exertion was subsequently made to follow up its success, and secure

[1] "What Napoleon's feelings were when he witnessed the overthrow of his guard—the failure of his last hope—the death-blow to his political existence, cannot be described, but may be easily imagined. Turning to an aide-de-camp, with a face livid with rage and despair, he muttered in a tremulous voice—"*A présent c'est fini!—sauvons-nous;*" and turning his horse, rode hastily off towards Charleroi.

the advantage, which skill and courage had obtained. The Prussian corps pressed the retreat with a spirit and alacrity that prevented any immediate rally from being attempted; and on the 19th Wellington was moving in excellent order upon the French capital—a wonderful military exploit, after such a conflict as that of Waterloo.

But what of the fugitive Napoleon? When hurried from "the lost battle" by his personal staff, he passed hastily through the wreck of a ruined army, and reached Genappe at half-past nine; and here his flight was so materially retarded, as to render his chance of escape at one time doubtful. The single street which formed the village was already crowded with fugitives, and impassable from the equipages, cannon, and caissons, which, from the terror of the drivers, had been overturned on the causeway, or confused and become inextricable. Through the wreck of this *materiel* Napoleon at last effected a passage, and, hurrying on to Quatre Bras, proceeded with great rapidity. There was another bridge across the river with which his guide was unacquainted, and thus the Emperor was directed to the defile of Genappe, and narrowly escaped being made prisoner. He seemed fully aware of his critical situation, and dreaded to find the Prussians before him at Quatre Bras, or hear the trumpets of their light cavalry in his rear. At Gossilies, however, he recovered his tranquillity, and dismounting from his horse, proceeded on foot to Charleroi. He passed through that town without delay, continuing his flight to the meadow of Marcinelle, where he halted with his staff.

His attendants pitched a tent upon the green, and lighted a fire. A sack of corn was loosely thrown on the ground, and the jaded horses of the fugitive group were permitted to refresh themselves. Wine and food having been procured, Napoleon partook of both; and this was the first nourishment he had received since he had breakfasted at eight o'clock at the farm-house of Bossu.

From the moment he left his last position in front of La Belle Alliance, till he rested at the bridge of Marcinelle, he preserved a gloomy silence. The observations of his staff when obstacles occurred upon the road, were only noticed by a sullen reply; but now standing with his back to the fire, and his hands in their customary position behind his back, he conversed freely with his aides-de-camp. About two in the morning he called for his horse—his staff immediately mounted—and Bertrand having procured a guide, the whole party followed the route to Paris.

After dark, on the 20th, Napoleon reached the capital, accompanied by his brother Jerome, Count d'Erlon, and a small staff—and occupied the Palais de l'Elysée. The night was consumed in numerous consultations with his friends, and in framing the bulletin of a battle, which had laid France "bare and defenceless, and placed her at the feet of her enemies." But what counsels could devise measures to counteract a misfortune which all admitted to be irremediable? What address could stimulate a nation to fresh exertions, on whom such terrible calamities had fallen? The ruin was so sudden, and so complete, that the most vigorous mind could not grapple with it. There was no proceeding, which ingenuity could devise, or zeal could execute, that presented the slightest chance of success. Submission—unreserved and absolute submission—was all the conquerors had left them. In vain did Napoleon demand men and money. Where were they to be had? The people would not rally round the fugitive, and the greater part of his old army was annihilated. With 60,000 disciplined troops, he was now to meet the shock of confederated Europe—for at Waterloo he had encountered little more than its advanced guard. The only alternative left was an abdication; and on the 22d of June, Napoleon formally renounced the throne in favour of the King of Rome, and a provisional government was appointed.

But this conditional resignation met a furious opposition from the Chamber of Peers. Fierce and inconclusive debates resulted—days passed—the allies were approaching the capital—and it was communicated to Napoleon that while he remained in Paris, there was no chance whatever of pacific arrangements being effected with the allied monarchs. On these representations the ex-Emperor consented to withdraw. On the 29th, he quitted his capital for ever, and repaired to Rochefort, after having in vain applied to the Victor of Waterloo for a passport to enable him to proceed to America. In idle projects to effect an escape from France, and elude the vigilance of the British cruisers, a short time was consumed; but despairing of success, he surrendered himself to the protection of an English commander,[1] and was eventually conveyed to that lone and cheerless island, where a career closed in solitude and captivity, whose noontide lustre had, meteor-like, been dazzling as evanescent.[2]

The convention having been ratified, on the 4th the posts of Neuilly and St. Denis were given up to allied detachments. The French army marched in the direction of the Loire; and on the 6th, the barriers of the capital were occupied by the confederates. On the 7th, the white standard of the Bourbons replaced the tricoloured banner of Napoleon—and on the next day, Louis XVIII. re-entered Paris, and the strange history of "the hundred days" ended with a general peace.

[1] Captain Maitland, of the "Bellerophon."

[2] Napoleon died on the island of St. Helena, 5th May 1821.

CHAPTER XV.

WITH the second restoration of the Bourbons, the Duke of Wellington's military career may be considered as having terminated, for although the French army on the Loire assumed a threatening attitude, and declined to acknowledge the monarch whom the allies had replaced, it eventually submitted to the existing government, and the country was tranquillised. The Duke took part in the deliberations for the settlement of European affairs, and it was chiefly owing to his counsels for moderation that France escaped so easily from the consequences of the late war, the general desire of the continental sovereigns being that there should be a confiscation of part of her territory. The British Government, however, agreed to the proposal of making France pay in part for the expenses of the war, and that, until this indemnity should be cleared off, and order restored throughout the country, an army of occupation should continue to hold the frontier fortresses, but not the capital. This army consisted of 150,000 men, of whom 50,000 were British soldiers. The chief command was given to the Duke of Wellington, and in this office he received enormous pay.

By the interference of Wellington, the Prussians were hindered from destroying the bridge of Jena and the Austerlitz column, which had been erected in Paris to com-

memorate the victories of Napoleon, and this conduct rendered him for some time popular with the French. But on his refusing to act on the appeal of the new government to hinder the works of art with which the Louvre and museums of the city had been enriched during Napoleon's conquests, from being restored to the peoples whose property they were, the bitter hatred that was really felt against Wellington—and that by all classes of the French—began to be evinced. Indeed it was but natural that so vainglorious a people should regard with utter dislike the hero who had overthrown their greatest armies, and had at length brought France to the feet of Europe. Once at a court levee the marshals of the army took occasion to show something of this feeling by offensively turning and walking away, while Wellington was being received, and the king, seeing this, begged to offer some excuses. "Don't distress yourself, Sire," observed the Duke quietly, "it is not the first time they have turned their backs upon me."

An amnesty had been proclaimed by the new government, which included nearly all who had ranked themselves on the side of Napoleon during the late rebellion. Among the few who were excepted was Marshal Ney, the leader of the Old Guard at Waterloo, for his conduct could scarcely be overlooked. On Napoleon's landing from Elba, Ney had solicited from King Louis the command of the army which was to be sent against him, swearing that within a week he would bring his late master to Paris in an iron cage. What Ney did, however, was to join Napoleon with the very corps of which Louis had given him the command. For such treason he was tried and condemned to be shot; and because Wellington declined to save the Marshal's life by using his influence with the French Government, he incurred the charge of being envious of his rival's great military reputation.

During his stay in Paris an attempt was twice made upon

the life of Wellington. During a ball on the night of the 25th of June, 1816, a plot to blow up his house by gunpowder was fortunately discovered. Again on the 11th of February, 1818, the Duke was fired at, as he was returning home in his carriage from a dinner party. The would-be assassin escaped at the time, but suspicion fell upon a person named Cantillon, who had formerly served under Napoleon. This man was arrested, and though his guilt was clearly established at his trial, he was acquitted. It was significant that Napoleon should bequeath 10,000 francs to this villain, and that the legacy was duly paid to his representatives long afterwards by the great Emperor's nephew.

In October, 1818, a Congress met at Aix-la-Chapelle, and on the representation of the Duke of Wellington it was agreed that the army of occupation should evacuate France, though according to the treaty it should have remained two years longer. The Duke thus unselfishly deprived himself of a most lucrative post, and France was freed from the presence of her conquerors.

On his return to England the Duke received a seat in the Cabinet of Lord Liverpool, having already been appointed to the office of Master-General of the Ordnance. At that time there was great discontent and distress throughout England, for the heavy taxation, after the vast expenditure on the French wars, was being severely felt. Commercial depression and panic made things worse. Labour was scarce and bread was dear. Hence the masses were turbulent, and serious riots occurred. The help of the Duke of Wellington at this crisis was very valuable to the government, as he wisely directed the military arrangements for the quelling of disturbance. From his experience abroad, both in India and Europe, he was well qualified for advising as to the conduct of the foreign affairs of the government,

and on different occasions he was employed on diplomatic missions to the courts of Europe.

In October 1822 George IV. went on a visit to Hanover, and was met at Brussels by the Duke of Wellington, who conducted him over the field of his great victory at Waterloo. "His Majesty took it very coolly," the Duke used to say; "he never asked me a single question, nor said one word, until I showed him where Lord Anglesea's leg was buried, and then he burst into tears."

On the death of the Duke of York, 5th December 1826, Wellington was appointed Commander-in-Chief of the entire British army, and at the same time was made Colonel of the Grenadier Guards. In 1829 he was appointed Lord Warden of the Cinque Ports, and in the discharge of the duties of this office he was ever watchful that our southern coast should be guarded against foreign invasion. Altogether the military pay of the Duke was not much less than £10,000 a year.

In February 1827, Lord Liverpool was struck down with paralysis beyond a hope of recovery, and the Duke of Wellington, declining to serve under the premiership of his successor, Mr. Canning, resigned his seat in the Cabinet with the Master-Generalship of the Ordnance. At the same time he gave up the command of the army. By taking this extreme step the Duke declared, in the strongest manner possible, his prejudice against Canning personally, as well as a public disavowal of the political principles of that ambitious but ill-used Minister. His own political views, which were due to honest conviction as well as hereditary feeling, placed him on the side of the old or thorough-going Tory party, of which, indeed, he was now the recognised head. It is true he was not popular during his political career, for he went against the wishes of the people on the great question of reform, and he was not always happy in giving expression to his opinions. The

words of Antony he might truly have applied to himself:—

> "I am no orator, as Brutus is,
> But as you know me all, a plain, blunt man."

Whatever may be said against his fitness for a leading share in political affairs, it cannot be doubted that he was always actuated by the purest motives of loyalty and patriotism.

It is not necessary to discuss here the events of the Duke's own administration (1827–30), as these are matters of political history more or less known to all. Through his influence with his party and the king himself, the repeal of the Test Acts and the Catholic Emancipation Bill became law. He saw clearly that such measures could no longer be delayed, and with characteristic good sense, he yielded to the demands of an enlightened public opinion. The following is a memorable passage from his speech before the House of Lords on the Catholic question: "My Lords, I am one of those who have probably passed more of my life in war than most men, and principally, I may say, in civil war too, and I must say this, that if I could avoid, by any sacrifice whatever, any one month of civil war in the country to which I am attached, I would sacrifice my life in order to do it." Soon after this the whole nation was violently stirred up by an agitation for political reform, but in this matter the Duke with his Conservative convictions neither would nor could give way. He really believed that the extension of the franchise would endanger the constitution and the welfare of the country. Accordingly, on the opening of Parliament (Oct. 1830) he declared "that he was not only not prepared to bring forward any measure of reform, but would resist such as long as he held any situation in the government of the country." The outcry was raised that his policy was to deprive the people of their liberties, and the storm that

followed overthrew the government. During the crisis the Duke was intensely unpopular; the hero of Waterloo was mobbed on the streets; and the windows of Apsley House, his city residence, were smashed by the insurgent crowd. "He guarded his windows with iron shutters as soon as quiet was restored, and left them there to the day of his death, as a standing memento of a nation's ingratitude." [1]

The narrative of the remainder of his life can be shortly told, as it was marked by no event of any great interest or consequence. He soon returned to popular favour, for the glory of his military services and the honest worth of the man himself were never to be forgotten. In 1834 he was elected Chancellor of the University of Oxford, from which he had received the honorary degree of Doctor of Laws in 1814. The following year saw him for a short time again at the head of the government, but it was only till Sir Robert Peel should return from the Continent. On the return of the Tories to power in 1841, he accepted a seat in the Cabinet, but without office; and this he retained till his death.

Next year he resumed the chief command of the forces, and by a patent of office, it was conferred upon him for life. He was a valued friend and counsellor to Queen Victoria, and in 1850 he acted as sponsor at the baptism of the present Duke of Connaught, who was named Arthur after him. Full of years, and crowned with all love and honour, the great Duke died at Walmer Castle on the 14th of September 1852, and was buried with great pomp in St. Paul's Cathedral.

On the 10th of April 1806, the Duke (then Major-General) married a daughter of the Earl of Longford, and two sons were the issue of this marriage—Arthur, Marquis of Douro, who succeeded to his father's titles, born in 1807; and Charles, who became a major-general in the army, born

[1] Gleig.

in 1808, and died in 1858. Arthur, second Duke of Wellington, died in August, 1884, and was succeeded by his nephew, Henry Wellesley, son of Lord Charles.

It has been objected to the Duke of Wellington's character as a great man, that he was constitutionally cold and impassable—stern in the exaction of duty—careless in rewarding merit—the end his mighty object—the means a matter of indifference. That charge is false, and had the publication of his extensive correspondence possessed no other value, it would have proved, in a hundred instances, that misfortune obtained his sympathy, and the widow and orphan met frequently in him a warm and an eloquent supporter. A gentleman went one morning into the Duke's room, and found him stuffing a handful of banknotes into several envelopes. "What are you doing, Duke?" "Doing? Doing what I am obliged to do every day. It would take the wealth of the Indies to meet all the demands that are made upon me." He subscribed most liberally to orphan asylums, "assigning as his reason that he had been the involuntary means of making many orphans, and was therefore bound to do what he could to provide for them."[1]

That his firmness approached severity may be imputed rather to the circumstances under which he acted at the moment, than to any natural harshness of disposition. Had he not possessed the sternest determination, the conflicting elements of which his army was composed could neither have been reduced to order, nor could their discipline have been maintained. To restrain military license, to assure the delinquent that his offences would be punished, examples were necessarily made; and their salutary effects were best evidenced by the fact, that the conduct of the allied army was as remarkable for peaceable demeanour in cantonments, as it was for its heroism and efficiency in the field.

To form a great general, mental and physical qualities

[1] Gleig.

are essential; and with both Wellington was largely gifted. In the vigour of manhood, few were better fitted to endure privations and fatigue. An economist in time, the space allotted for personal indulgence was brief—his hours for repose were limited—his meals were simple and rapidly despatched—and hence, the greater portion of his time was passed in the saddle or bureau; and no hospital or cantonment escaped his visits, nor did a letter or report remain unanswered.

In his manner and address the Duke was always frank, and, when he pleased, dignified and graceful. Easy of access, the soldier's complaint was as attentively listened to as the remonstrance of the general. If a favour were required it was promptly granted, or as decisively refused; and on the merits of a statement, when once a decision was made, influence would be used in vain, and entreaty pass unheeded.

In personal simplicity, the Duke's costume was in keeping with his character. He despised everything like parade, and excepting when their services were necessary, dispensed with the attendance of his staff. Nothing could be more striking than the plainness of his appearance in public, when contrasted with the general frippery and parade of his opponents; and the peasantry could scarcely be persuaded that the unpretending personage who courteously listened to their story, or returned a passing salute, was that great captain, whom conquest had attended from the Tagus to the Seine.

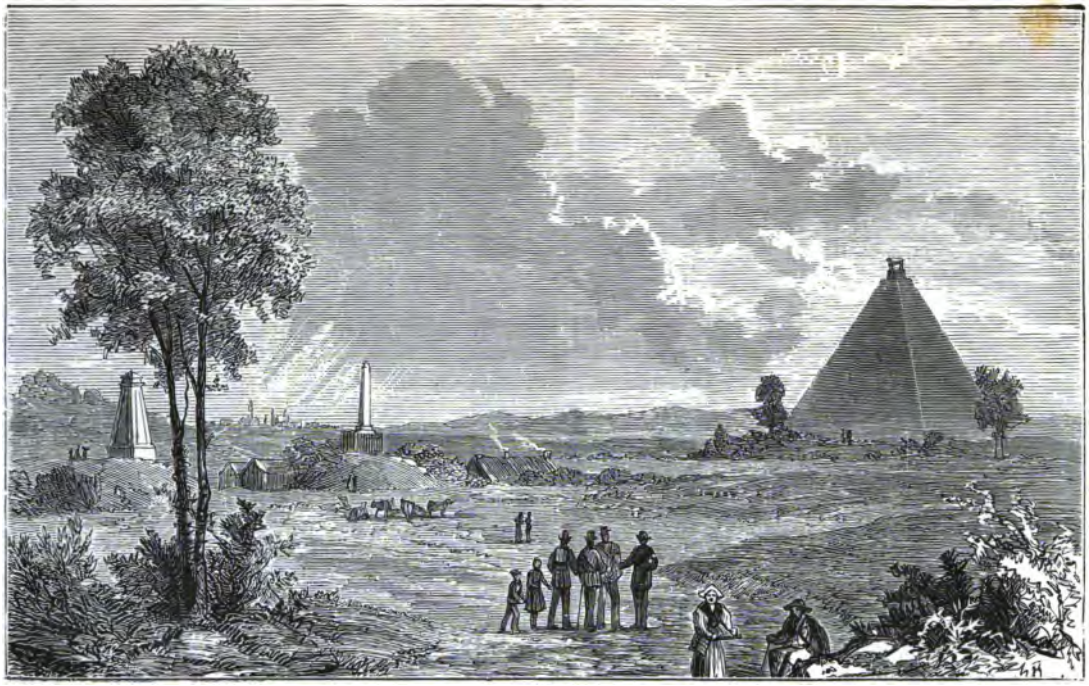
In the prime of manhood, Wellington's appearance indicated both activity and strength. In height he was nearly five feet ten inches; his shoulders were broad, his chest expansive, his arms long; the hand large, but well formed; the wrist unusually bony; the whole frame-work evincing a capability of enduring the extremity of fatigue. The keen, grey eyes were brilliant; and his sight remarkably acute.

His face was long, the features striking; the nose aquiline, the brow open and developed, and the lower portion of the face contradicting, in a singular manner, the stern and almost iron expression of all above the mouth.

The general expression of the Duke's face was cheerful. In probably the most trying moment of his career, when the failure of the attack on the great breach at Badajoz was communicated, he was observed to be pale, but perfectly collected. In the hour of his triumph, when he had ascertained the extent of his conquest, and found that the laurels of Salamanca were added to his wreath, the admirable historian[1] of his wars thus describes him as he stood:—"I saw him late in the evening of that great day, when the advancing flashes of cannon and musketry, stretching as far as the eye could command, showed in the darkness how well the field was won; he was alone, the flush of victory was on his brow, and his eyes were eager and watchful, but his voice was calm, and even gentle. More than the rival of Marlborough, since he had defeated greater warriors than Marlborough ever encountered, with a prescient pride he seemed only to accept this glory as an earnest of greater things."

In estimating the military talents of Napoleon and Wellington—for to compare either with any other commander of the age would be absurd—to the former, a superiority has been generally conceded for the decision with which he followed up a defeat, and the important consequences which always were attendant on his victories. Both were admitted to have possessed an inimitable skill in handling masses of men, with the same facility that ordinary commanders directed the movements of a brigade. Their combinations were beautiful, their conceptions grand—they were not the laboured efforts of military art, but the outbreakings of military genius, formed in a moment, executed

[1] Napier.



MONUMENT ON THE FIELD OF WATERLOO. *Life of Wellington*, p. 342.

as rapidly—changed, should circumstances require, and adapted to meet the emergency that might arise. If Wellington did not push his victories to grand results, let us inquire the causes; and when Napoleon's military *improvisation* is declared unequalled, let us see how far Wellington's was behind.

The circumstances under which these two great commanders conducted their campaigns were different, for Napoleon had never Wellington's difficulties to contend with. The former was a free agent. His battles were delivered to clear away obstacles that impeded an advance, while Wellington's were generally received to enable him to maintain a position in the country. Napoleon, when victorious, had always the means in hand to push his success, and secure the fruits of conquest. Wellington's battles were frequently defensive; and the heavy repulses which masterly combinations enabled him to inflict, were unadorned with the trophies which accompany a bold advance; and often his most brilliant fields were followed by regressive movements, which always follow a defeat and rarely attend on victory.

"That he was less fast in his designs, less daring in execution, neither so rapid nor so original a commander as Napoleon, must be admitted, and, being later in the field of glory, it is to be presumed that he learned something of the art from that greatest of all masters; yet something besides the difference of genius must be allowed for the difference of situation; Napoleon was never, even in his first campaign of Italy, so harassed by the French, as Wellington was by the English, Spanish, and Portuguese governments. Their systems of war were, however, alike in principle; their operations being necessarily modified by their different political positions. Great bodily exertion, unceasing watchfulness, exact combinations to protect their flanks and communications, without scattering their forces,

these were common to both. In defence firm, cool, enduring; in attack fierce and obstinate; daring, when daring was politic; but always operating by the flanks in preference to the front: in these things they were alike; but, in following up a victory, the English General fell short of the French Emperor. The battle of Wellington was the stroke of a battering-ram; down went the wall in ruins. The battle of Napoleon was the swell and dash of a mighty wave, before which the barrier yielded, and the roaring flood poured onwards, covering all."[1]

The following picture of the Duke in his old age is drawn by Carlyle:—"Truly a beautiful old man—I had never seen till now how beautiful; and what an expression of graceful simplicity, veracity, and nobleness there is about the old hero when you see him close at hand. His very size had hitherto deceived me. He is a shortish, slightish figure, about five feet eight, of good breadth, however, and all muscle or bone. His legs, I think, must be the short part of him, for certainly on horseback I have always taken him to be tall. Eyes, beautiful light blue, full of mild valour, with infinitely more faculty and geniality than I had fancied before; the face wholly gentle, wise, valiant, and venerable. The voice, too, as I again heard, is 'aquiline,' clear, perfectly equable—uncracked, that is—and perhaps almost musical, but essentially tenor or almost treble voice. —Eighty-two, I understand. He glided slowly along, slightly saluting this and that other; clear, clean, fresh as this June evening itself, till the silver buckle of his stock vanished into the door of the next room, and I saw him no more."

Great and many were the dignities conferred upon the hero of the Peninsular War and Waterloo by his own nation and the governments of Europe. He held the titles of Duke of Wellington in the peerage of England, Duke of

[1] Napier.

Ciudad Rodrigo in that of Spain, Duke of Vittoria in that of Portugal, Prince of Waterloo in that of the Netherlands, &c. &c.

Statues and other monuments in honour of the Iron Duke have been erected in most of our large cities and throughout the land; and, if anything else were needed to keep fresh the memory of his great worth, it is given in the noble lines of Tennyson's *Ode on the Death of the Duke of Wellington*:—

"Such was he; his work is done;
But while the races of mankind endure,
Let his great example stand
Colossal, seen of every land.
And keep the soldier firm, the statesman pure;
Till in all lands, and through all human story,
The path of duty be the way to glory.
And let the land, whose hearths he saved from shame,
For many and many an age proclaim
At civic revel, and pomp, and game,
And when the long illumined cities flame,
Their ever-loyal iron leader's fame,
With honour, honour, honour, honour to him,
Eternal honour to his name."

THE END.

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